CHICAGO ON THE NILE

A CENTURY OF WORK BY THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

EMILY TEETER

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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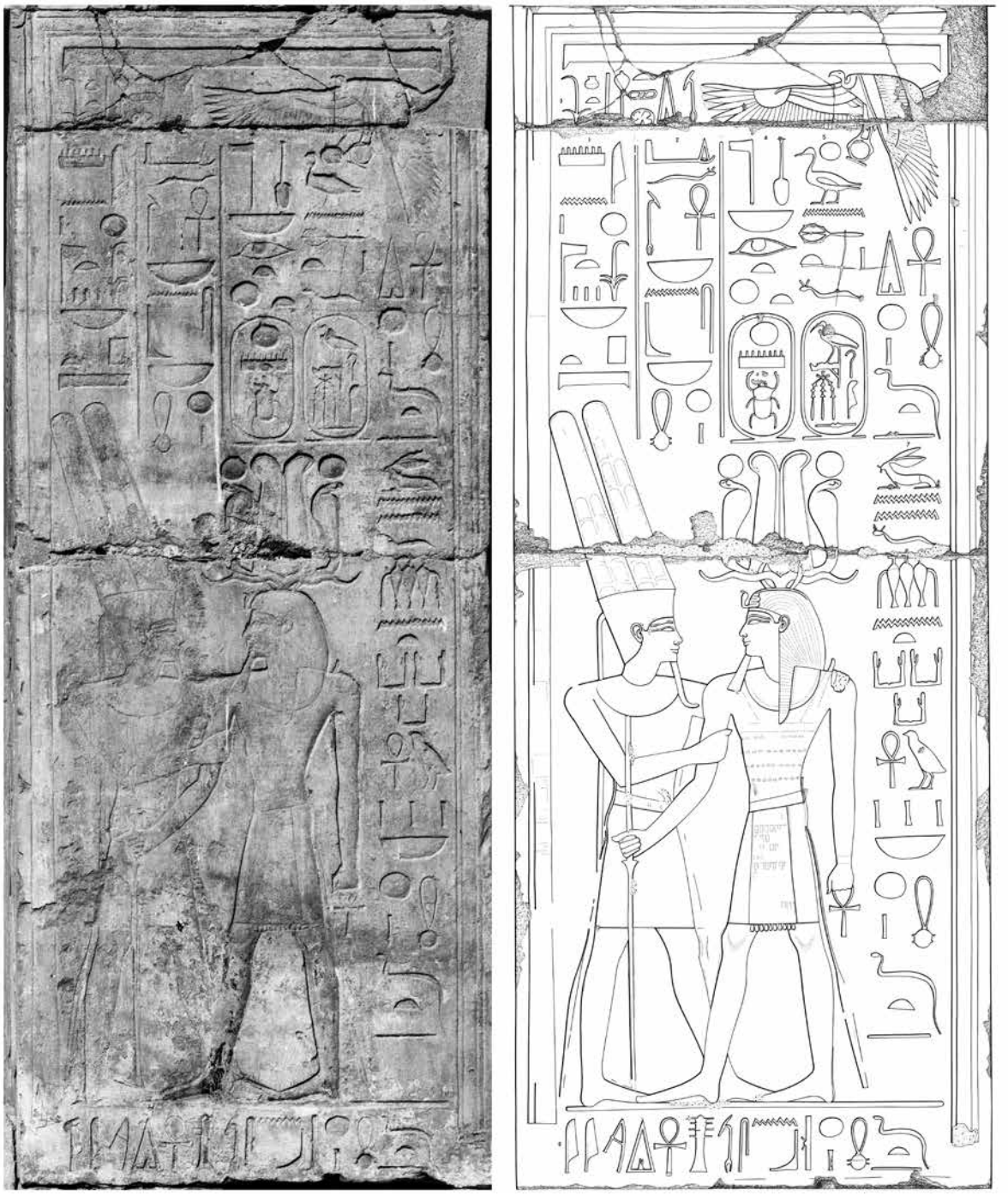

Thutmose III embraced by Amun
(*Medinet Habu* X, pl. 158)

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Emily Teeter

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Notes to Readers

Dates of Field Seasons

Field seasons of the Epigraphic Survey generally run from October to the following April, so the 1967 season began in October 1967 and ended in April 1968. In this book, "the 1970 season" refers to fall 1970 to spring 1971. "The 1967–1968 seasons" refers to two consecutive seasons, from October 1967 to April 1969.

Transcriptions and Spelling

Spelling errors and other obvious typos in the source documents have been corrected. Paragraph breaks may not reflect those in the original document. Some sentences have been truncated for clarity.

Alternative Spellings and Names

Aye/Eye
Amen/Amon/Amun
Assuan/Aswan
barks/barques
drafting/draughting
draftsman/artist
Egyptologist/epigrapher
enclosure/inclosure
Fostat/Fustat
Gourna/Gurna/Gurnah/Kurna
Gufti/Kufti/Qufti
Harmhab/Horemheb
Hoelscher/Hölscher
rais/reis
Ramesses/Ramses
Ramessid/Ramesside
Sakkara/Sakkarah/Saqqara
Seti/Sety
Tutankhamon/Tutankhamun

Usage

"First floor" is used in the American sense as the ground floor; the "second floor" is one level above the ground.

The name of the Egyptian ministry that oversees the country's cultural heritage and excavations has changed several times over its more than 160 years:

Egyptian Antiquities Service / Service des Antiquités / Department of Antiquities	1858–1971
Egyptian Antiquities Organization	1971–1993
Supreme Council of Antiquities	1993–2017
Ministry of State Antiquities	2017–2021
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities	2021–present

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Abbreviations

Abydos	Amice M. Calverley, with Myrtle F. Broome and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos*, 4 vols. (London: Egypt Exploration Society and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933–58)
AJSLL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AR	*Annual Report of the Oriental Institute*; since 2023, *Annual Report of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures*
ARCE	American Research Center in Egypt
Archeological Newsletter	*Oriental Institute Archeological Newsletter*, "issued confidentially to members and friends," dated October 15, 1950–March 11, 1973
ASAE	*Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*
AUB	American University of Beirut
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
Battle Reliefs	The Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (OIP 107) (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1986)
Beit el-Wali	Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente, *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition—Volume 1: The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II* (OINE 1) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967)
CEDAE	Centre d'Étude et de Documentation sur l'ancienne Égypte
CHB	*Chicago House Bulletin*, 1990–present
CHP	Chicago House Paper, internal inventory number of the Chicago House Archive, Luxor
EAP	Egyptian Antiquities Project (grants awarded by ARCE)
EES	Egypt Exploration Society
Excavation	Uvo Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934–54)
FOCH	Friends of Chicago House
IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale
ISAC	Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures at the University of Chicago (known as the Oriental Institute until 2023)
ISACM	ISAC Museum
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JdE	Journal d'entrée (Cairo Museum)
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
Key Plans	Harold Hayden Nelson, *Key Plans Showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations* (OIP 56) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941)
Kheruef	The Epigraphic Survey in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities of Egypt, *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192* (OIP 102) (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980)

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Khonsu	The Epigraphic Survey / Helen Jacquet-Gordon, *The Temple of Khonsu*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1979–2003)
KV	Kings' Valley (Valley of the Kings)
LFC	large-format collection (photo)
Medinet Habu	The Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu*, 10 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press / Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago / Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago, 1930–2024)
Mereruka	The Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, 2 parts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938)
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art
n.d.	no date
OI/O.I.	Oriental Institute (known since April 2023 as the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures)
OIC	Oriental Institute Communications
OINE	Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
personal comm.	personal communication
PL	Public Law
Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak	The Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak*, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press / Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1936–86)
Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple	The Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994–98)
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
Tb.	*Tagebuch*; excavation diaries of Uvo Hölscher, 1927–31
Topographical Bibliography	Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, vol. II, *Theban Temples* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929; 2nd ed. 1972); vol. VI, *Upper Egypt: Chief Temples* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1939)
TT	Theban tomb
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Foreword

Timothy P. Harrison
Director, Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures—West Asia & North Africa

The Epigraphic Survey of Egypt stands as one of the truly monumental field expeditions of North Africa and West Asia. From its inception, the Survey has been guided by an outsized vision and determination: to document the extraordinary written and pictorial records of pharaonic Egypt, and to conduct this epigraphic mission with the finest documentary methods and highest standards. As conceived by James Henry Breasted, now more than a century ago, the Epigraphic Survey has achieved and maintained an unsurpassed standard of excellence that has become synonymous with the discipline. This sustained commitment to documenting ancient Egypt's civilizational monuments has produced a prodigious and foundational record of its history and culture.

It is also a remarkable and compelling story. Drawing on the extensive archival records of the expedition itself, Emily Teeter has assembled a rich and detailed narrative of this colorful and eventful history. It is a story of struggle, endurance, and perseverance, and ultimately of an unwavering commitment to the fundamental value and importance of the epigraphic mission. Over the course of a century, as Teeter observes, the Epigraphic Survey and its physical counterpart, Chicago House, have achieved near-mythical status. Their bold vision required courage and a tenacious determination to succeed, and, invariably, a sustained scholarly brilliance that is manifest in the distinguished lineage of epigraphers, illustrators, and documentarians who have served on the Survey, each with their own unique and interesting personal stories, preserved in the voluminous correspondence they produced. In the early years, the manifold challenges also included often-daunting working and living conditions, now a distant memory in the quiet halls and on the grounds of the wonderful facility that is the Survey's current home. Teeter faithfully yet sensitively narrates these extraordinary stories, while highlighting the vital contribution the Epigraphic Survey has made since 1924 to preserving and documenting the rich civilizational history of ancient Egypt.

Teeter's history also accentuates the critical importance of the Epigraphic Survey's ongoing work, providing a valuable frame of reference for the vital tasks that remain as the Survey enters its second century. Today, the Chicago House Method remains the epigraphic standard, and the Survey's active and uncompromising commitment to preserving cultural heritage confirms the considerable importance and relevance of its continuing work and mission. In the face of the accelerating destruction of Egypt's irreplaceable cultural heritage, this mission is more urgent than ever. The Survey's active engagement with national and local community partners in preserving these monuments further underscores its deep respect and value for their priceless cultural heritage.

In short, the Epigraphic Survey's enduring commitment to its mission, community engagement, and cultural preservation, together with its long and distinguished history of unsurpassed epigraphic excellence, bodes well for the success of its next century of exploration and discovery.

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Preface

J. Brett McClain
Field Director, Epigraphic Survey

"*It is now a century since the work of recording the written monuments of Egypt in modern facsimiles began. . . .*" With these words, Professor James Henry Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute (now Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures) at the University of Chicago, introduced the Epigraphic Survey's first publication, *Medinet Habu* I, to the scholarly world. His magisterial foreword retrospectively evaluated the development of Egyptian epigraphy as a scientific endeavor from Champollion's day until his own. Acknowledging the decipherer's great achievements and those of his successors over the course of the nineteenth century, Breasted also evaluated their shortcomings, leading to his transformative conclusion: even after a hundred years of pioneering epigraphic work, the bulk of ancient Egypt's hieroglyphic inscriptions remained inadequately recorded, because the technical methods and resources hitherto available were insufficient. Further, the rapid deterioration of written records that had survived for millennia would lead inevitably to permanent and irreplaceable loss.

Having convincingly established the need for action to save Egypt's ancient history from oblivion, Breasted then outlined his vision for a new survey of the monuments, an ambitious undertaking that would command not only the latest and most accurate methods of scientific recording but also the resources and organizational capabilities of a modern university, enabling a program of comprehensive epigraphic documentation both systematic and precise. In autumn 1924, after years of experimentation, planning, and gathering the necessary financial and institutional support, the Epigraphic Survey, Breasted's solution for rescuing the past and preserving it for the future, arrived in Egypt, and its work among the ancient temples and tombs began.

Of course, by the time he completed his foreword in 1929, Breasted could be confident at least of the initial success of his endeavor, the realization of which was the magnificent folio volume of photographs and facsimile drawings then in hand. The academic grandeur of his prose, however, only hints at the years of hard work, problem solving, innovation, and (at times) sacrifice required of Breasted himself; of Harold H. Nelson, the Epigraphic Survey's first field director; and of the intrepid team of artists, photographers, Egyptologists, and support staff who, in the first years of the expedition, made this ambitious vision into a functioning reality. The story of how the Epigraphic Survey came into being, engagingly recounted here by Emily Teeter and richly illuminated with selections from Breasted's and Nelson's official correspondence, archival photographs, and other documents, forms the first part of this book.

Yet *Medinet Habu* I was only a beginning. A full century has passed since the Epigraphic Survey began its work in Luxor. Could our founder have imagined that, despite the Great Depression, World War II, revolutions, a pandemic, and other vicissitudes of Egypt's modern history, the expedition would still be working after 100 years? If so, he would have been both astonished at the expedition's durability and gratified by its long-term success in achieving its intended purpose. As Breasted would well have appreciated, this ongoing achievement, though soundly based on a clearly articulated and scientifically valid set of objectives, has primarily arisen from the expertise, professionalism, and tireless dedication of the expedition staff themselves. This book also tells their story, and because of the exacting, systematic nature of the Epigraphic Survey's approach, it is a tale of endurance, of persistent, detailed study of the inscriptions and the rigorous and consistent application of sound methodology. Year after year, in the early autumn, the team has returned to Chicago House,

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the University's permanent headquarters in Luxor by the Nile, for another six-month campaign of photography, drawing, and epigraphic analysis of the monumental sites. Because this is a story about people, many of whom spent large portions of their lives in the field, it is not without dramatic moments, crises, and personal tragedies and triumphs, many of which are related here. Through it all, however, the Epigraphic Survey staff have maintained an unwavering commitment to the project's core objectives of accurate documentation and publications of the highest standard, earning universal recognition for the unsurpassed quality of their work.

Now the Epigraphic Survey will begin a new century. Since Breasted's time, Egypt has been profoundly transformed, and the working environment of the expedition is unlike anything he could have envisioned, necessitating continual adaptation to political, economic, and environmental changes that have profoundly affected not only the nature of fieldwork but also the preservation of the monuments themselves. The threat of losing their records to deterioration was his most important realization, and history has proven his foresight: the decay of the ancient structures has greatly accelerated over time, and the need to copy and publish the inscriptions accurately is far greater now than it was in 1924. Although a range of modern tools and techniques has greatly expanded the capabilities of the Epigraphic Survey, its mission remains both critically important and fundamentally straightforward: to document and publish the ancient inscriptions on Egypt's pharaonic monuments at the highest level of accuracy and quality, ensuring that the written records of this great civilization will survive for future generations. Our work is well begun, but much remains to be done, and the story of the Epigraphic Survey will continue.

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Introduction

Emily Teeter

I was inspired to write this book primarily by my admiration for the work and publications of the Epigraphic Survey. To me, as a student at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (now the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, or ISAC), the Survey was a magical thing. Select graduate students would be anointed and whisked off to Luxor; faculty members would puff on their pipe or cigarette and tell stories of who did what; and retired field directors, especially Charles Nims, were regarded as repositories of very special knowledge about Luxor. I (along with my fellow graduate students) was enthralled. The oversized volumes of *Medinet Habu*, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak*, and *Temple of Khonsu* (of which I of course obtained my own copies) were all parts of my life as I researched my dissertation. I even unsuccessfully competed for a typically nerdy University of Chicago graduate student prize for book collectors, confident that the sheer size and heft of my collection would win. It didn't. Probably bested by someone with an "everything Saul Bellow" collection.

More recently, and more germane to actually taking on this project, I was inspired by Eric Cline's book *Digging Up Armageddon: The Search for the Lost City of Solomon* (Princeton University Press, 2020), which recounts the often-colorful history of the University of Chicago's excavations at Megiddo. I was fascinated by the portraits of the people and their work, and I thought somebody should produce a similar account for the Epigraphic Survey. I talked with Ray Johnson, then its field director, who said it was good timing because they were discussing what sort of publication to issue in conjunction with the Survey's 2024 centennial. At that time, he was thinking about a picture book on Chicago House. I suggested that because the centennial was really for the Survey itself, this would be an opportunity—perhaps the only one for many years—to write a thorough history, not only of the Survey in Luxor but also its offshoots in Nubia and Saqqara, as well as its often-fraught relationship with the Abydos Expedition, to explore how politics and funding, personalities and accidents of fate, had formed and directed the work.

As I read hundreds of archival documents in Chicago and Luxor, and others that started to pour in from other sources as the project got underway, the Survey—especially its field directors, but also some of the epigraphers and artists (also called "draftsmen" or "draughtsmen," a distinction that even they failed to understand*)—took on new life. Though I knew so many of the names, I had at first no idea of their character or behavior, but the letters began to create images. Soon, the style and character of the letter writers became very familiar to me, especially those of Charles Breasted, with his self-importance and unmistakably colonial attitude toward Egyptians and their officials. The number of letters sent between Chicago and Luxor is astounding. They were augmented by personal recollections of many past (and present) field directors and staff members who shared their stories.

Researching this book made me think hard about how so much has changed. Things that were common concerns in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s now seem so distant, such as how dangerous the Nile could be in the inundation season. Its strong current made crossing the river hazardous. The uncontrolled waters flooded

* In 1932, Epigraphic Survey field director Harold Nelson wrote to Survey founder James Henry Breasted: "Our men who do the drawings are inquiring anxiously what is the distinction between 'draughtsman' and 'artist' as appears in the list of the staff of this expedition in new Commemoration circular. They want to know just why the distinction. Can you help me out?" (Nelson to Breasted, 26 January 1932, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1274).

houses and gardens, so vegetables could not be planted until the waters receded; the diet of Survey staff was different in the late summer than in the winter. Even work at the temple of Medinet Habu could not start until the water started to recede.

As recently as the mid-1980s, life in Luxor was very different. Food staples were rationed or simply not available. Most packaged goods had to be ordered and shipped from Cairo. Even into the 1990s, visitors to Chicago House were asked to bring peanut butter, unsweetened chocolate, Grape-Nuts, Tang (really!), cans of cranberry sauce, boxes of photo paper, and (if you were strong and unlucky) a fuel pump for one of the cars. Alcohol and chocolate were always welcome—and still are.

Another difference was how such close and constant communication was maintained before phones, faxes, and email became common. Telegrams were reserved for the most urgent business, both for their cost and because everyone in the telegraph office would know Chicago House's business—and news traveled fast in Luxor. For the most urgent and most confidential matters, codes were used. Letters also flew back and forth between Cairo and Chicago (literally, with the advent of TWA's direct New York–Cairo service in 1946). Sometimes two missives departed from the field director's or James Breasted's office in a single day, some running three or four typed pages. The speed at which the mail traveled was striking. In April 1946, one letter took only five days to reach its destination—"the fastest I have yet known," Harold Nelson remarked—its speed attributed to the new direct air route to Cairo.[1]

Well before the dawn of email came the sad demise of the information-packed letters. The documentation is very uneven from 1973 onward, and sparser still from 1977 to 1988, during Lanny Bell's time as field director. For those years I had to rely on sanitized annual reports, but luckily, longtime staff member Carol ("Cairo") Meyer was an old-fashioned correspondent who wrote frequent letters to her family—and even more fortunately, the family kept the archive. Much of the "color" for Bell's term is thanks to Carol's letters.

Peter Dorman is not only a living resource who was happy to recount so many details of the work and the house; he also instituted the *Chicago House Bulletin*, which contains much information—again, much of it formal, but also including stories about Friends of Chicago House (FOCH) tours and parties at the house. Kathy C. Dorman, a teacher before she was the *mudira** of the house, wrote a book (the as-yet-unpublished "Crocodile in the Playground") about her experiences in Luxor with her daughters, Margaret and Emily. Ray Johnson, too, was an invaluable source with very special insights from his years at the house as staff (artist and senior artist), then another twenty-five years as field director. The current field director, J. Brett McClain, who also came up "through the ranks," was generous in sharing his memories.

One cannot escape, or ignore, the colonial attitude of the "scientific" (non-Egyptian) staff toward the Egyptian staff and even many of their colleagues. Few of the field directors or staff spoke more than "kitchen Arabic." The house staff were, until very recent days, called "servants," and one has to dig to find the names of many of the individuals who worked at Chicago House for decades, sons often succeeding their fathers. For years, fraternizing with the locals was often frowned upon. A notable exception was longtime Chicago House engineer John "Tim" Healey, who apparently had admiration for and a true friendship with the Survey's Hagg† Ibrahim Mohammed Abd el-Rahman. They appear together in many photos, including a very touching formal studio portrait of the Healey family (see photo opposite). However, things have changed since the late 1990s with the addition of many Egyptians to the professional and administrative staff.

Most of this book is based on two groups of correspondence. The first is in the ISAC Museum Archives at the University of Chicago, and I thank Anne Flannery, ISAC archivist, for facilitating my many requests.

* Arabic for (female) "manager."

† Arabic honorific for an individual who has visited Mecca.

Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed Abd el-Rahman (top right) with Tim and Doris Healey and their sons, Derek John and Valentine, 1964. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

John Larson, former archivist at the (then) Oriental Institute, scanned much of Nelson's correspondence and supervised Robert Wagner's enormous project of transcribing and translating the Hölscher correspondence.

The second archive is at Chicago House, much of it recovered from dusty storage areas by Tina Di Cerbo. Many "new" documents have appeared in Luxor over the years as Tina continues to find files tucked away in corners of the magazines (storerooms). Since 2006, this material has been scanned and organized by Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudiès, and I thank them many times over. This project could not have been done without their admirable CHP (Chicago House Paper) system and index, their eye for accuracy, and their patience with my many questions.

Researching the illustrations for the book was an enormous undertaking that involved most of the Chicago House staff. We held a series of meetings in Luxor, each person armed with a laptop of images, and in some cases also with vague memories of the perfect image that we needed to track down. Photographer/archivist Sue Lezon was able to retrieve important photos that she recalled from her many years of cataloging them. With her characteristic desire for photographic perfection, she undertook the enormous task of reviewing and editing each one. It was daunting—and fun—to be presented with one subsection of the Chicago House archive after another. The glass slides? The Burton photos? The autochromes? Oh, and then there are the contact sheets from the Habachi Archive, and the next day a stack of fascinating financial ledgers to peruse. Some of the images used here were taken by current staff members who generously allowed their personal work to be reproduced. One of my own fond memories was discussing the early boats used by the Survey and then scrambling over the Chicago House garage with Alain to triumphantly identify the boat on its roof as the *Ramesses III*. I also thank Susan Allison, associate registrar of the ISAC Museum, for retrieving photos from the labyrinth of ISAC's database.

Families of former staff members have donated important records to ISAC or to Chicago House, especially David Woolman, whose parents, Laurence and Janet Woolman, played large roles in the design of the excavation houses in Luxor and Memphis; Laurence was also a draftsman for the Architectural Survey at Medinet Habu. The Woolman Collection is full of photos, letters, and Laurence's elegant (but apparently forgotten) renderings of the Eastern High Gate at Medinet Habu. I thank Eric Cline for bringing that material—sitting, unbeknownst to me, in the ISAC archive—to my attention. David Woolman himself has provided direction and needed corrections to some of my interpretations. Valentine Healey, son of Tim and Doris Healey, donated an invaluable photo album that documents Luxor and activities at Chicago House

from the early 1930s through Tim Healey's retirement in 1970, including many candid images of the staff. The Abdellahi family in Gourna graciously loaned their family photo album to Chicago House so that some of the images could be rephotographed and used in this book. A collection of forty-six snapshot prints from Caroline Ransom Williams in the Chicago House archive, a gift from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, did much to bring the social life of the mid-1920s into today. The family of the first field director, Harold Nelson, who deserves credit for the success of the Survey, has been very helpful (and hopefully intrigued). I thank the Krewson, Weideman, and Young families for photos and memorabilia. I hope this book reminds them of the extraordinary lives of Harold and Libbie Nelson and their daughter, Irene.

As this project progressed, groups of archival material came on the market. One quite remarkable one, with a complicated journey back to Luxor, is the photo album of J. Anthony Chubb (artist for the 1927–35 seasons), which was purchased in an Edinburgh shop in 2000 by Mrs. Yoshi Funaki and presented to Chicago House. Several of the images published here for the first time are from the Chubb album. I thank Dr. Anthony Marks, Tom Hardwick, and Ray Johnson for making a series of letters and other valuable documents available. Peter Der Manuelian, who is researching Prentice Duell of the Sakkarah Expedition, shared Duell's illuminating photo album of the Saqqara expedition house, and Stephanie Boonstra of the Egypt Exploration Society shared a charming, hand-drawn map of Luxor that allowed us to pinpoint the location of the house occupied by photographers John Hartman and, later, Henry Leichter.

Among the people who contributed to this project in the form of conversations are former field directors Edward F. Wente, Kent Weeks, Peter Dorman, Ray Johnson, and the late Charles C. Van Siclen, as well as former Oriental Institute directors John Brinkman and Janet H. Johnson.

Members of the Chicago House staff helped with this project. Among the many, I give special thanks to Brett McClain, Tina Di Cerbo, Sue Lezon, Susan Osgood, Yarko Kobylecky, Jen Kimpton, Keli Alberts, Dominique Navarro, and of course Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudiès. I only wish that I could have had enough time to speak to each and every one of the staff. I also thank colleagues who at one time worked at Chicago House or knew it well: Jim and Susan Allen, Thad and Diana (née Olson) Rasche, Peter Der Manuelian, and Ann M. Roth, as well as William H. Peck, Kathleen and Gerry Scott, and other colleagues, including Peter Brand, Janice Kamrin, Kevin Cahail, W. Benson Harer Jr., John Baines, and Naguib Kanawati. I thank Lee Cain for his genealogical research to locate the Nelson family, and Margaret Schmid for her invaluable proofreading. I also thank James Fraleigh and Connie Tappy for their careful reading (and improvement) of the text, and Andrew Baumann, managing editor of ISAC Publications (and himself a Survey epigrapher and artist for four seasons), for his meticulous checking of the text and notes and for seeing the project through to print. I must also thank my husband, Joe Cain, who endured periods of neglect while I immersed myself in this project, for his patience, confidence, and enthusiasm.

What follows is the story of the University of Chicago's century-long effort to document, conserve, publish, and interpret Egypt's pharaonic cultural legacy. It is organized by project, because each site—be it Medinet Habu, Karnak, Luxor Temple, the Old Kingdom tombs at Saqqara, or another—has its own origin story: why Breasted and his successors thought it needed to be documented, what the plan was for the work and its publication, and what ultimately was achieved. The section on the work starts with Medinet Habu because that enormous site was the Survey's first project, and after a century its documentation is ongoing. Virtually all field directors and their staff worked there, so it provides the main story of how the Survey was organized and who was involved. Most of the later projects were chosen, in part, for how they related to Medinet Habu chronologically or thematically, and all the "other" projects were undertaken with consideration of what they meant for the ongoing work at the original site.

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This text places its emphasis on the publications for each site and how they reflected—or did not reflect—the original plan, the differences often being the result of financial or political factors. Such factors are also leitmotifs that run through the book, because fieldwork does not exist in blissful academic paradise but is buffeted by budget cuts, academic politics, and political change, most notably the decolonization of Egypt starting in the 1950s.

This account of a century of work by the Epigraphic Survey intertwines academic policies and national politics, changing economies, and a whole lot of good stories about interesting people, all working toward the same goal of documenting ancient reliefs and inscriptions—a mission that continues today.

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1 James Henry Breasted's Vision: "It is the texts that matter"

The story of the earlier life of James Breasted (1865–1935) (fig. 1.1) and his founding of the Oriental Institute has been told elsewhere,[1] but the story of his Epigraphic Survey—now a hundred years old—bears examination.

Breasted's doctoral research and work on the Berlin Egyptian dictionary entailed making accurate facsimile copies of texts in museums. That experience exposed him to what was possible, and with the unbounded enthusiasm of Americans at the turn of the century, he wrote, "I am now laying plans to copy not merely the historical, but *all* the inscriptions of Egypt and publish them."[2] And only a few years later, with his 1905–7 epigraphic expedition to Nubia, he set out to do just that. He devised a process that integrated photography and collation, establishing the basic process that, to a large degree, is still followed today (see appendix B).

It is one thing to have bright and ambitious ideas. It is another entirely to be persistent and ingenious enough to fund and implement them. Breasted was especially gifted, for he had the rare combination of intellect and the ability to communicate the importance of his academic undertakings with clarity and enthusiasm to people who could help him reach his outsized goals. Inspiration was not the problem—as Breasted wrote in 1899, "The only possible thing which could interfere [with achieving my goals] would be the lack of money."[3] Breasted was extremely fortunate to have formed a strong and lasting bond with John D. Rockefeller Jr., who, personally and through his foundations, was responsible for making possible most of Breasted's plans in Egypt, throughout the Middle East, and in Chicago. As Rockefeller wrote, "The contributions which I have made to the Oriental Institute have been based partly on my interest in the field which it covers—largely because of my belief in you."[4]

Breasted made no small plans. His first expedition, launched in 1905 on the occasion of only his second visit to the Nile Valley, set the goal of publishing all the historical texts on the monuments. It was followed by his 1922 collaboration with Alan H. Gardiner to make a "concerted attack" on copying the Coffin Texts in the Egyptian Museum with an international team that included Pierre

James Henry Breasted with his son, Charles, and wife, Frances, at the temple of Amada in Nubia, 1906. During this expedition, Breasted developed his method of epigraphy. Photo: F. Koch, ISAC Museum Archives.

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Figure 1.1. Breasted in his office in Haskell Hall at the University of Chicago, surrounded by publications, antiquities, and a plaster cast, ca. 1929. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

Lacau,* Ludlow Bull, Norman and Nina de Garis Davies, and Adriaan de Buck (fig. 1.2).[5]

According to Breasted, he formulated his move to an even larger-scale undertaking of copying inscriptions in Thebes in 1923. As he recalled (in third person) about his involvement with the events a dozen years later,

> it was at this time, while sitting in a wheel chair in the beautiful gardens of the Winter Palace [Hotel at Luxor], that he dictated a plan of campaign for the development of an epigraphic survey of the temples of Egypt, to begin with the great Medinet Habu temple opposite Luxor. This preliminary draft he sent to his former pupil and old friend, Dr. Harold H. Nelson, then head of the department of history in the American University of Beirut. The correspondence thus opened led shortly to a conference with Dr. Nelson in Cairo, on the Director's invitation; and in the course of a few weeks the project was more definitely developed and Dr. Nelson's adherence secured.†

* Lacau (see fig. 4.3 in chapter 4) had already published several studies on the Coffin Texts, including *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1904–6), and "Textes religieux écrits sur les sarcophages," in J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906–1907)* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1908). He declined to be directly associated with the Breasted Coffin Texts Project.

† J. H. Breasted, *The Oriental Institute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 69. Nelson's participation was not assured until May 1924. See chapter 2, "Harold Hayden Nelson: The First Field Director."

Figure 1.2. The Coffin Texts Project copying texts in the Egyptian Museum, 1922. Photo: J. Hartman, ISAC Museum Archives. Left to right: Nina de Garis Davies, Alan Gardiner, James Breasted, Ludlow Bull(?).

Breasted presented Nelson with a proposal to be part of a grand project:

> Let me explain more specifically what I have in mind. As you know, I have long been distressed at the gradual disappearance of the hieroglyphic documents in situ in the Egyptian temples. I want to put into the field an epigraphic expedition. Its publication should be exhaustive and include the temples of Thebes, at least the temples of Karnak, Luxor, Medinet Habu, and the Ramesseum. Of these, you will remember, Medinet Habu is still as a whole practically unpublished. I do not know how many volumes this would make, but hazarding a guess, I should say from seven to ten volumes. That would be a block of scientific work of incalculable value and one of which any orientalist might be proud. The Institute is now in a position to furnish the means, the men, and the equipment for doing this job. The situation here is very favorable for its accomplishment, and I have now definitely decided to go ahead with it.[6]

A few months later, he added with supreme confidence, "Our enterprises are far more extensive than anything I had ever hoped would be actually realized in my lifetime."[7]

In May 1924, Nelson signed a contract with the University of Chicago to be the first field director of its new Epigraphic Survey (see chapter 2, "Harold Hayden Nelson: The First Field Director," and chapter 3, "Medinet Habu, 1924–"). And so the Epigraphic Survey was born.

Although the Survey was the fulfillment of Breasted's dream, he envisioned at first that he would not be overly involved. On October 4, 1924, he wrote to his mentor, Adolph Erman, "I do not personally expect to spend very much time on this task. What I am trying to do is to get such enterprises well started and then keep a controlling hand upon them, to see that the work is carefully done."[8]

Why Medinet Habu?

But where to start in Luxor? Breasted selected Medinet Habu (fig. 1.3; plan 1), the great complex

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Figure 1.3. Aerial view of Medinet Habu, the temple complex of Ramesses III (ca. 1184–1153 BC), looking southwest. The Great Temple with its two pylons is in the center; the Small Temple of Amun and the Eastern High Gate are to the left. The ruins of the temple of Aye and Horemheb are in the lower right. Photo: E. Teeter.

of Ramesses III (ca. 1184–1153 BC), because, in his estimation, its wall reliefs were "of outstanding historical importance"; they included "the earliest known representations of European peoples," which, along with the historical sources in cuneiform that record the same events, could be used to create a comprehensive and accurate history.[9] The reliefs on the temple's walls provided a perfect example of how accurately documenting them and their texts could add to the historical record. More pragmatically, Breasted noted to Nelson, "The reason we are attacking Medinet Habu is the very fact that so few of its texts are published."[10] Work began there in fall 1924 and continues to this day.

As will be related throughout this volume, Breasted had a vision for ambitious work throughout the Nile Valley. This vision was most expansive in the years following World War I when the European powers, whose economies had been so damaged in the war, had to curtail some of their activities, thus giving Breasted the opportunity to enact some of his plans. He declared his intent to publish the entire Karnak complex, Luxor Temple, the Ramesseum, the tomb of Ramesses III in the Valley of the Kings, and the Roman temple at Deir el-Shaweit. Further afield, in 1930, he mused about documenting Amarna,[11] and in 1931, the temple of Behbeit el-Hagar in the Delta. Initially, the planned

work at Saqqara included at least nine Old Kingdom mastaba tombs, and he discussed expanding that work to include Middle Kingdom paintings and reliefs, starting at Beni Hasan.

The University of Chicago's foray into excavation and resulting architectural documentation at Medinet Habu inspired Breasted to consider an architectural survey throughout the *entire* Nile Valley. As he wrote in 1927, "Eventually I hope we can organize an architectural survey of Egypt. It is one of the most needed projects on the Nile. . . . Such a survey would make an invaluable series of volumes and I have had it in mind for years."[12]

Breasted planned that his life's work would continue long after he was gone. In 1924, he wrote that he had made

> a definite decision regarding the future work of the Oriental Institute. You will be interested to know that on my way through New York last month, while I was stopping at Mr. Rockefeller's house, he assured me of his cordial support of the work I was endeavoring to carry out, and that he would furnish its maintenance for another five-year period at double the present annual budget. This means that the work of the Institute is definitely assured on a much-expanded scale until the summer of 1929. It means further that its future is morally assured as permanent, not only during my working lifetime, but also afterward, because even if Mr. Rockefeller should withdraw his support after my retirement (he will certainly not do it before), the work of the Institute will be already so established and recognized as an indispensable department of research that the University of Chicago will be inevitably bound to go on with it.[13]

What follows is the astounding story of how Breasted's vision for the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys was implemented and expanded over the next century by their field directors, the staff of Chicago House, and the University of Chicago.

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2 Harold Hayden Nelson: The First Field Director

Harold Nelson (1878–1954) was essential to the formation and success of the Epigraphic Survey and Chicago House. His association with James Breasted dated to his college days at the University of Chicago. In 1913, he received his PhD under Breasted with a thesis on the Battle of Megiddo. Well before he received his degree, he had begun teaching in the history department at the American University of Beirut (AUB), where he also served as the curator of the university's museum (fig. 2.1).

Letters between Nelson and Breasted in 1922 concern academic matters, especially Nelson's efforts to place promising AUB students (including John A. Wilson) at the University of Chicago,* and the French excavations at Byblos of Pierre Montet (who was to discover the royal tombs at Tanis in 1939). Nelson also followed the news from Chicago and commented on the careers of his former colleagues David Luckenbill, William Edgerton, and Ludlow Bull. In August 1922, he wrote to Breasted, saying how impressed he was with his description of the then-new Oriental Institute and wistfully comparing that vision to his own situation at AUB. He likened his lot to "riding two horses," as he was required to teach a broad range of classes from the history of the ancient Near East to "the Origin and Settlement of the Great War," commenting, "Either is a man's size job, and to try to do both at the same time is killing me and very hard on the students."[1] Such comments may have given Breasted the idea that Nelson could be persuaded to leave AUB.

In late January 1924, less than a year before the Epigraphic Survey started operating, Breasted began discussing with Nelson the possibility of his becoming its field director. In a long letter, he outlined the Rockefeller funding and the commitment of the University of Chicago to work in Egypt, summarizing, "The

Harold H. Nelson, the first field director (1924–46), in formal dress, ca. 1937. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

* Many letters from 1922 concern arranging a fellowship in Chicago for Asad Jibrail Rustum. In 1923, Rustum received his PhD in history from the University of Chicago, and from 1927 to 1943 he taught in the history department of AUB.

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Figure 2.1. Harold Nelson (back center) in Beirut, ca. 1906. Front left: Daniel Bliss, first president of the American University of Beirut. Back left: Harry G. Dorman, first dean of medicine at AUB and grandfather of Peter Dorman, Epigraphic Survey field director 1989–96. Men at front and back right are unidentified. Photo: Nelson family.

Institute is now in a position to furnish the means, the men, and the equipment for doing this job."[2]

The early talks involved Nelson maintaining his employment with AUB but working for the University of Chicago in Luxor from October to May. Breasted envisioned a University of Chicago–AUB collaborative effort, combining forces to form a "Beirut headquarters which . . . might eventually develop into an Asiatic headquarters for the Oriental Institute." He pointed out the mutual advantages: "[this] . . . would be something of a personal union resulting from the fact that you are Curator of the Museum, and I should hope that you would continue in this office. Your annual sojourn in Egypt could only contribute to the enlargement of the collections at Beirut. All this raises the further question whether there would be any further space available at the university or in the

Museum building where the Beirut headquarters of the Oriental Institute might be housed."[3] He even suggested that Chicago would be willing to rent the space from AUB.[4] Breasted proposed that they take a research trip through the Sinai during which details could be worked out. Although the trip fell through, the discussions continued. By February 14, Nelson reported that the AUB senate had approved his seasonal absence to work in Thebes, writing, "It is the kind of field work that I would rather do than any other and the kind which I believe is the most necessary to be done. You may be sure that I will do my best to make the enterprise a success and to hasten the work along as fast as possible."[5]

In May, Nelson signed an "informal contract" for five years at an annual salary of $3,500 (plus travel and housing expenses). His relationship with AUB continued to be a point of discussion. Nelson was torn between the two institutions, and Breasted tried to adjust Nelson's schedule to ensure that he could return to Beirut in the spring with enough time to teach a course. This would work to Breasted's advantage for achieving his "personal dream" of a "permanent headquarters for archaeological work in western Asia, situated at Beirut." Although he admitted that he had "no official authorization from the University of Chicago in the matter," he was enthusiastic, for he had "seen a number of such dreams actually realized in the last few months."[6]

Things moved fast. On September 24, 1924, Nelson arrived in Luxor to assume his position as field director of the Epigraphic Survey—ten days before he was even officially on the University of Chicago payroll. Multiple letters arrived each week from Breasted, often combining discussions of the length of Nelson's contract (changed to three years), furniture, water systems, and stationery for the new headquarters, Chicago House.[7]

Nelson continued to maintain his position at AUB, expressing misgivings about leaving Beirut because he both loved the environment of Lebanon and had worked hard to build up the history department, the future of which in his absence worried him.* On May 2, 1926, he proposed to Breasted that he officially split his time, going to Luxor in early October, then working at AUB from mid-February to mid-March, and then returning to Egypt to finish the season at the end of April. His letter couched it in terms of family obligations ("It is going to be the very greatest of disappointments to Mrs. Nelson, and a serious drawback to Irene's† proper education, if I leave here for Luxor"), but it also betrayed his preference: "I cannot face the possibility of giving up my connection with the Luxor work, the opportunity for which I have been hoping all my life. If I give that up it will mean a moral letdown, in so far as it will mean a voluntary giving up of opportunity." Nelson admitted that the plan might not be palatable to either side: "The combination plan, beside other drawbacks, means a division of interest which is serious. Either way lie serious consequences from the decision I must make."[8]

Breasted's May 26, 1926, response reflects a change of heart, for he seems to have abandoned his "dream" of an "Asiatic headquarters" in the Levant. He no longer supported Nelson's retaining his position in Beirut, which Breasted had previously thought to be a key to that earlier goal. This shift may have been a result of the disastrous collapse of the Egyptian Museum plan of 1925 and a realignment of Breasted's priorities.[9] As he wrote to Nelson, "We are going forward in our development of scientific work in the Orient, to a great future. Unless the Egyptians themselves approached me on the Cairo Museum matter, I shall make no efforts on their behalf involving such an expense of time and strength as I suffered last winter," suggesting that Breasted had decided to focus entirely on developing the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor. He was quite

* To add to Nelson's sense of guilt, in 1926 Philip K. Hitti resigned from the department to take a post at Princeton, leaving only a single faculty member: Rustum (Nelson to Breasted, 4 July 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 676).

† His daughter, who was eight years old at the time.

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Figure 2.2. Harold, Irene, and Libbie Nelson, ca. 1925. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

blunt in his assessment of Nelson's time-splitting suggestion:

> It will be a grievous disappointment to me if you are unable to remain in full and executive charge of the Luxor work. I have serious doubts whether you can carry the burden of this responsibility and continue to function for the American University at Beirut. . . . It does not seem to me, from our point of view, at all a practical plan. Nor from the University point of view can I understand how such a plan could be made of great value to our Beirut friends. You are too useful a man to be wasted endeavoring to pick up broken threads, tie them together for a month and then decamp again.[10]

By July, it was apparently clear that the best path for Nelson and his family was for him to resign from Beirut. Nelson described the decision as a "real wrench"[11] and his letter of resignation to AUB president Bayard Dodge that month as "one of the most difficult letters I have ever written."[12] He continued to negotiate with Breasted on such details as the terms of the Chicago appointment (permanent and removable only for "academic or moral cause"), the amount and types of pensions, a higher salary ($5,000), and support for his daughter Irene's education. By the end of 1926, all was settled, and Nelson, as research professor at the University of Chicago and field director of the Epigraphic Survey, settled into a post that he was to

hold for twenty-three years. For all those years, he was accompanied by his wife, Libbie (fig. 2.2), who made enormous contributions to the Epigraphic Survey in establishing and managing the old and new Chicago Houses and by entertaining—and placating—countless guests. Irene lived with her parents in Luxor from 1924 (when she was six years old) until 1935, when she left Egypt for school in the United States.* For many years, the Nelsons returned during summers to their house at Shweir in the mountains of Lebanon.

* Irene Louise Nelson attended two years of high school at Schutz in Alexandria, and then the Holmquist School for Girls in New Hope, Pennsylvania (since 1949 named Solebury School), starting the latter in fall 1935 (Nelson to Mrs. Holmquist, 28 February 1935, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1886).

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3 Medinet Habu, 1924–

Harold Nelson and the Early Years, 1924-1940

The First Years, 1924-1926

For its first season, the staff of the Epigraphic Survey in 1924 consisted of Harold Nelson as field director and epigrapher; artist Alfred Bollacher from Berlin, who had illustrated catalogs for the Königliche Museen collection;* and photographer John Hartman, who conveniently lived in Luxor and had worked with Breasted on the Coffin Texts Project. Breasted offered to help with the epigraphic side, and they anticipated assistance from Alan Gardiner (fig. 3.1), then one of the preeminent philologists with whom Breasted had worked on the Coffin Texts Project two years before. The budget also included Egyptian support staff consisting of a darkroom assistant, two additional photographic assistants for positioning the camera, and at least three men to move the ladders and scaffolds. The *reis*† would be selected from among the ladder men.[1]

The Egyptologist/epigrapher side of the staffing was admittedly thin considering that Nelson was consumed with administering the Survey and overseeing the construction of the field headquarters. An additional problem was that Chicago House initially had no library, so the most essential bibliographic resources needed to be sent to Luxor—especially copies of any Medinet Habu texts or reliefs previously recorded and translated, which were particularly important for restoring damaged or missing sections of text. Breasted, with the help of Gardiner and Hermann Grapow (the coeditor of the *Wörterbuch*, the Berlin Egyptian dictionary), arranged for copies of the *Zettel*, the Berlin dictionary slips that recorded vocabulary used in the Medinet Habu texts, to be sent to Luxor.[2]

Epigraphers and artists on ladders, supported by assistants, documenting the north wall of Medinet Habu, ca. 1927. Foreground: William Edgerton, John Wilson, or J. Anthony Chubb. Background: Alfred Bollacher and Harold Nelson. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

* Bollacher and Breasted had been in contact for many years. A letter in the collection of the University of Bremen from Günther Roeder to Adolph Erman, dated 17 July 1902, refers to Bollacher doing work for Breasted. I thank Tina Di Cerbo for bringing this letter to my attention.

† The chief of the workmen (also spelled *rais* in the correspondence).

Figure 3.1. Sir Alan Gardiner (right) with James H. Breasted at Medinet Habu, ca. 1933. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

Breasted and Nelson (fig. 3.2) planned to go carefully through the bibliography on the temple "before we can ourselves publish a single plate. . . . We must in every case be thoroughly convinced by exhaustive examination that there are no old writings hidden away in earlier volumes which might be available for completing the lacunae of the present day." In doing so, they wished to avoid repeating what they saw as a major flaw in Edouard Naville's publication of Deir el-Bahari, in which the key scene of the Queen of Punt was not included because it had been transferred to the Egyptian Museum. They resolved that "it will be necessary to settle upon a systematic plan of procedure in this matter which will involve sending every plate, when the field work on it is finished, either to Europe or America, for it will be impossible for us to set up a complete library at Medinet Habu."[3]

In December 1925, blueprints of texts and reliefs made by Nelson and his staff were sent to Egyptologist T. George Allen in Chicago and Alan Gardiner in London for their comments and to check for any earlier publications of the scenes.[4]

Nelson's lack of rigorous training in the Egyptian language (he had been a professor of history) was a problem. As he wrote to Allen the summer before the first season, "I am trying to learn a little about hieroglyphic, about which I find that I know very little. . . . I am trying to get some sort of feel for the Ramses III style. I believe that Medinet Habu, as far as difficulty of the text goes, is the hardest piece of work that the Expedition will have to undertake. It makes me quake to think of beginning with it. But I suppose Breasted is the one who ought to worry, and not I."[5] In the first two seasons, Breasted relied on Gardiner for help with the texts. Nelson acknowledged that "we ought not to publish without such assistance,"[6] to which Breasted replied, "You are quite right that we ought not to publish without careful collation by some such critical eye as his."[7]

Breasted trusted Nelson's abilities, but he admitted that putting in Gardiner's hands so much of the collation process, which entailed careful comparison of the drawing with the original, created a difficult dynamic: "It would be important, of course, to see to

Figure 3.2. Harold Nelson and James H. Breasted at the beginning of their long collaboration, 1927. Photo: C. Ransom Williams, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

it that the collations to be made by Gardiner are duly in hand, so that you can test the new readings from the wall itself."[8] Further, Breasted asked Gardiner to do the bibliographic research on the temple reliefs in European libraries and museums, although he did request of Nelson that, if he had "any degree of disappointment at all in view of Gardiner's offer to do this work, please tell me frankly and I am sure that this matter can be adjusted. In the interests of expediting the work I take it Gardiner's assistance would be useful."[9] Indeed, Nelson had been looking forward to the change of routine afforded by doing bibliographic work in European libraries. Although he initially agreed to Gardiner's assistance,[10] a couple of days later he expressed himself with unusual frankness: "I have not had the opportunity to use a library at all in connection with the work, and that ought to be done, and ought to be done by me, for I know the temple better than anyone who has not worked here."[11] The next day, he sent Breasted a more contrite note, again putting the interests of the project over his own: "With regard to Gardiner's cooperation in the matter of collation with the British Museum manuscripts, I think it by far the best idea. I naturally would like to do some of it myself, but, in the interests of the work, I believe that Gardiner would be far the better man and he could do that while I am doing work here or am working on the photographs in Beirut in the summer."[12] And so, as Nelson was consumed with running all aspects of the expedition, blueprints of the texts were sent to Gardiner in London and to Allen in Chicago for collation.[13]

Nelson's relationship with Gardiner, who was known for being exacting and judgmental, continued to be a problem. In 1925 (and again in 1926), Gardiner pressed Breasted and Nelson to add Egyptologist Adriaan de Buck to the staff, a move that Nelson was not eager to make, writing, a bit defensively, "I should be very happy to have de Buck here for a time this winter, but I should prefer it to be as late in the season as possible. I have had no opportunity as yet to do much work at the Temple, and I do not want to hand over my present copies of the inscriptions to a stranger to criticize. I can have a large mass of stuff ready for him later; now it is not ready." Nelson later deferred de Buck's visit partially on the basis of there being no room for him at the house and, still later, advocated for John Wilson on the basis of making the staff more American.[14]

One gets the impression that Nelson often felt the shadow of Gardiner over his shoulder, and at the end of the second season, he wrote frankly to Breasted: "I was also anxious to find out whether my surmise that he [Gardiner] does not entirely approve of my being in charge of this important work is correct."[15] It did not help matters that early in the second season, Gardiner was sent ten photographs with Nelson's collations to check, work that Nelson admitted contained "a number of careless mistakes."[16]

The format of the planned publications was also a topic of early discussion, because it would dictate photography and how to divide the vast areas of text and reliefs. In August 1924, Nelson queried Breasted:

> Have you reached any decision regarding the size of the publication we are going to get out? Will it be the same as the Oriental Institute Series?* I am anxious to know definitely about this before we reach Luxor for we can do no work till this point is settled. Of course, it may be possible to get most of the material on pages of that size, but some will undoubtedly have to be printed on larger pages if we are not to split up columns. How would it do to use the size of the OIS, printing single pages where this is possible, double pages where necessary and, in the case of the longest columns, folded pages of whatever length may be required. The objections to this method are, I suppose, that double and folded pages in time tear where they are folded. If, however, we are to use that size of publication, it is the only way that I see of avoiding the very unhappy method of cutting up the columns. Please let me know your decision on this matter as soon as possible, as the time is passing rapidly and I am anxious to have your instructions fully in hand before we reach Luxor.[17]

The two were also concerned about setting up a system for recording and correlating the negatives and drawings and their location in the temple. Breasted instructed Nelson:

> Be sure, when you have once begun, to follow a system of consecutive numbering of negatives very slavishly, and insist that Hartman set up his numbers, insofar as it is physically possible, where they will be photographed on the negative. I know that this may involve serious difficulties at points where Hartman himself is on a high platform and the scene to be photographed can only be reached by a ladder, but I believe he could train one of the native boys to insert a couple of wooden pegs in a joint in the masonry, and set the numbers on these pegs or perhaps on a strip of tin plate. Of course, the numbers will have to be on little blocks of wood, for if on cards they will of course blow away, unless Hartman can make a slotted block for holding them. You will find him a fairly handy man in such matters, and quite able to meet such situations.[18]

Although placing small numbers in the field of the photo was followed, and some photos show a numbered card on a meter stick or seemingly balanced on the edges of blocks, the suggested procedure turned out to be impractical for several reasons—not only the prospect of a young boy balancing himself stories above the ground, but also Nelson's objection that if "the number . . . is a part of the negative itself, it cannot be erased without spoiling the negative."[19]

Nelson also argued that adding the numbers to the margin of the negative rather than in the image was a better procedure because

> when the plates are finally published, the number of the negative will appear on the printed plate and will in many cases not correspond at all to the number of the plate in the publication. . . . Also, if you desire to use these photographs at any time for publication elsewhere, the number stands out like a sore thumb. It is the very disfiguring character of such numbers that make me dislike to use them in our work. If I carefully numbered the negatives as soon as they were dry, using India ink and protecting the same with a varnish, I believe, with care, that the series could be kept in order. There are going to be times when we shall probably be obliged to skip a small portion of wall for some reason or other,—such as difference between morning and evening lighting,—and return to it

* Oriental Institute Series (OIS) may have been the projected name of the series that became Oriental Institute Publications (OIP). Oriental Institute Publications no. 1 (*Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting,* 1924) and no. 2 (*The Annals of Sennacherib*, 1924) both measured 12″ × 9½″, much smaller than the eventual Epigraphic Survey volumes.

> later. In that case, the numbers photographed will not correspond to the logical order on the walls. Any system has its difficulties, but the system of photographing the numbers seems to me to have less in favor of it than that of numbering by ink on the margin. However, you are the Director of the Institute and I shall follow instructions unless I hear to the contrary from you.[20]

Luckily for the future, Nelson's recommendation was followed, although there are negatives that include a number card.*

On November 18, 1924, the Epigraphic Survey of the University of Chicago began work at Medinet Habu. The small group lived nearby at the newly completed Chicago House (see chapter 11, "Old Chicago House, 1924–1940"). Chicago Egyptologist T. G. Allen stayed at the house for several weeks to advise Nelson on the best way to start their work.[21]

The first question, when the group was confronted with the enormous temple complex, was where to start. Breasted left it largely up to Nelson, but he suggested that the northeast side would be "the most feasible."[22]

Needing a plan of the Great Temple to plot out the location of the texts and reliefs,[23] Nelson contacted James Quibell, then the secretary general of the Service des Antiquités, who responded that only a very old one without details was available. Nelson asked Breasted whether copies could be made of the plans in the old publications of Lepsius and de Rougé, which were available in Chicago, and sent out to Luxor.[24] He commented that he would postpone commissioning a new one until he received the copies from Chicago. Turning to another resource, Nelson asked Bollacher to draw a new plan, but Bollacher demurred, saying he did not have the experience. Nelson finally took it upon himself to make a "complete plan of the temple," done on tracing cloth for durability.†

Hartman began photographing the exterior of the temple, positioning himself on mounds around the structure because delivery of the ladders and scaffolding was delayed until the end of November (fig. 3.3). He then started on the rooms in the back of the temple—images that would be filed away until they began seriously working in that area. He also started the enlargements of the images of the

Figure 3.3. John Hartman photographing the south exterior of Medinet Habu, using mounds of debris as a scaffold, ca. 1925. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

* See, for example, photos LFC 1, 94, 624, and 845. Oriental Institute large-format negatives nos. 1–845 include a number card in the image. I thank Alain Arnaudiès for this information.

† It was not until 1939 that Nelson completed, with the assistance of Charles Nims and Richard Parker, a final plan of the Great Temple at Medinet Habu (Parker to Wilson, 16 February 1939, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1850). See also Nelson to Allen, 9 October 1925, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 543.

Calendar. Although initially an effort was made to take all the photographs at the same scale, this approach was abandoned and meter sticks of different lengths were included in each negative.

Work started on the south exterior wall with the Calendar, because "it was the hardest."[25] By December 1924, the entire exterior of the temple had been photographed. But in the process, the team discovered that the 5″ × 7″ film Hartman had used was unsuitable, for when the negatives were enlarged on 16″ × 20″ paper, the "signs were too small to be usable." As a result, the entire Calendar was rephotographed using 8″ × 10″ film. But the earlier effort was not wasted, as the smaller negatives could be used for the large-scale hieroglyphs and reliefs at the top and bottom of the wall. Nelson projected that the two sizes of text would be presented separately, thus eliminating issues with matching them. He concluded that the entire exterior should have been shot with 8″ × 10″ film.

The team quickly amassed an enormous number of photographs and drawings that needed to be organized and cross-referenced. In 1925, Nelson switched from maintaining a book in which the documents were listed to a card catalog, because the book did "not allow of all the information I would like to have available for each photograph."[26]

The first two seasons were a time of experimentation. Nevertheless, the Survey staff managed to accomplish much, considering that they were still working out details of the epigraphic method and photography while settling into their new house.

They worked according to a procedure that Breasted had established from his work on the First Epigraphic Expedition to Egypt and Sudan (1905–7), which also consisted of just three men: Breasted as the Egyptologist/epigrapher, an artist, and a photographer. Following the earlier procedure, Nelson and Hartman conferred at the wall to "determine just about how many square meters of wall we can include in a given photograph, and have it ultimately come out the right size on the printed page."[27] Nelson then told Hartman what size enlargement was required, took that print to the wall, and, as he described, followed these steps:

> Then I work over the enlargement, placing a piece of tracing paper over the photo and drawing in on the tracing paper such signs as are difficult to make out or which are broken. I also put in such signs as are missing that I can restore with certainty, taking into account the physical factors, such as size of the lacunae, traces on the wall, parallel passages and idioms from elsewhere on the Temple. Then Bollacher draws on the enlargement with a pencil, using my data and notes.[28]

Nelson then checked that drawing against any older photographs or publications. Breasted or Gardiner made a third check before the drawing was inked.*

The conventions Bollacher was to follow also took some working out, especially whether block lines should be indicated. In the early discussions, the team decided to simply leave "gaps in the inscriptions and sculpture."[29] Another issue concerned lacunae not due to losses at the joins of blocks. Nelson decided to use an "ordinary black line" for what was visible on the stone and dotted lines for all restorations.

Then there was the question of how to record the reliefs. Bollacher asked whether he was to record "lines running perpendicularly on a curved cornice freehand and parallel or diverging at the top as they appear in the photograph." Nelson directed him to reproduce the lines as they would appear in a photograph. A further question related to damaged areas of the wall. Should they restore the missing parts of human bodies or horses, or should they record only what was actually on the wall? Nelson opted to indicate restorations with dotted lines, and decided

* This is the reverse of the order followed later. See appendix B and Breasted to Nelson, 19 December 1924, ISAC Museum Archives.

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that restorations based on older publications were to be enclosed in brackets.[30]

Nelson further queried Breasted, "Shall we remove the photograph after drawing in what we can do here, or shall we wait till you or the people at Chicago have gone over the work and can supplement our efforts here?" Fortunately, Nelson had access to the library at the nearby Metropolitan Museum excavation house, where he could "refresh [his] memory on how others have met these problems."[31] Of great help was a draft bibliography of Medinet Habu that Bertha Porter—later the coeditor of the magisterial 1929 *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*—forwarded to Nelson in August 1924.

By December 1924, just months after beginning work, Nelson reported that he and Bollacher had finished the west wall (Bollacher's drawings in pencil only) and three scenes on the north wall, and that they had started on the scenes of the king recounting gifts to Amun on the west end of the south wall, which Nelson judged to be "easy going." Then they would begin the Calendar, which Nelson predicted would be "where our troubles will really begin."[32] They waited for warmer weather to complete the north exterior wall.

The enormous scale of the temple (the exterior walls rise 79 feet) necessitated the use of "Strilback" ladders and "Rip-Rig" scaffolds ordered from Slingsby in London.* The scaffolds presented challenges because the walls were battered, so the upper levels of the scaffolds were not close enough to the wall surface for the epigraphers and artists to see the reliefs (fig. 3.4). They experimented with field glasses, but overall they relied on bosun's chairs that dangled from the top of the pylon (fig. 3.5) or the equally dangerous multistory ladders propped against the walls (fig. 3.6). Nelson recalled, "One feels rather exalted on the top of three of the stagings of scaffolds, and as I am not very agile, I do not make a graceful figure ascending or descending. But I am becoming more expert." The ladder and scaffold men were essential members of the team who, Nelson recalled, "work with little supervision."[33] This essential equipment was stored in a little movable shed made of packing crates chained to the wall behind the *gaffir*'s (watchman's) house at the temple.

Figure 3.4. Workmen erecting a precarious scaffold in the First Court at Medinet Habu, ca. 1928. Photo: J. A. Chubb, Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Acquiring photo paper was a challenge. Initially, Hartman recommended the use of Belgian-made, double-weight paper that could be purchased more cheaply in Cairo than in the United States, although the quality was not quite as good. An additional problem was that any paper (and film) stored over

* Some of the multistory Strilback ladders from 1925 are still in use.

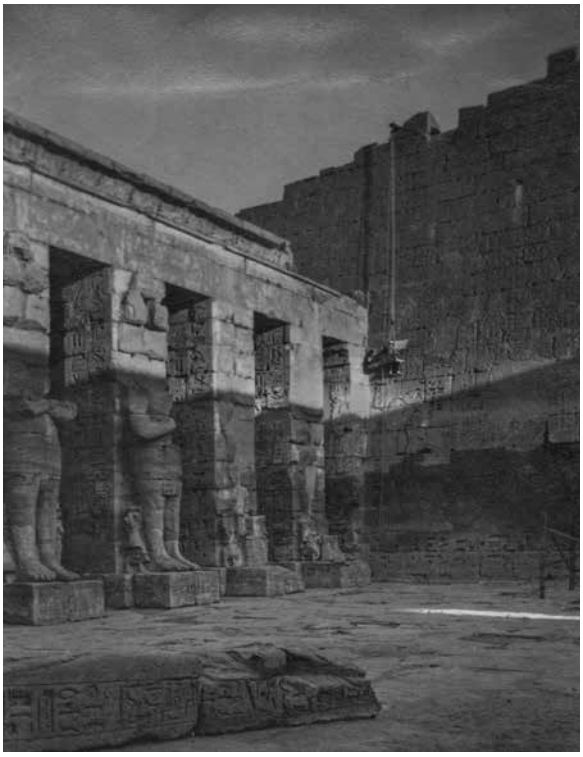

Figure 3.5. J. Anthony Chubb in a bosun's chair checking texts in the First Court at Medinet Habu, 1927. Photo: Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

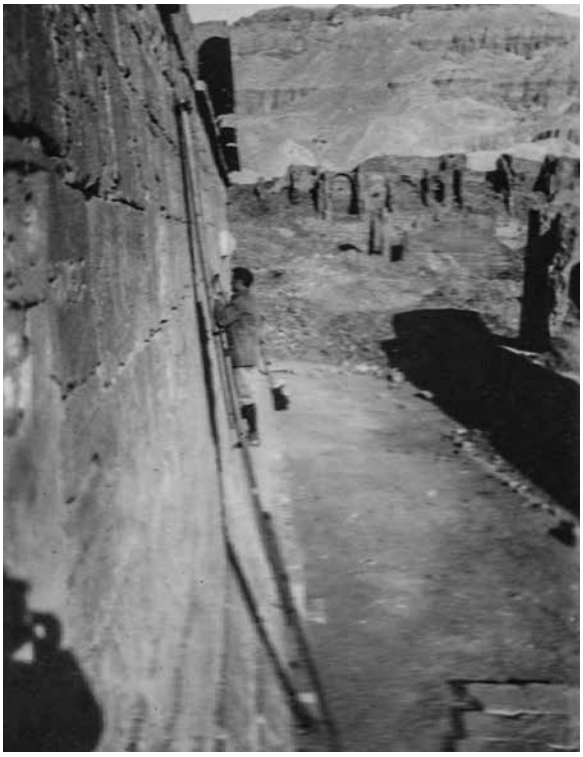

Figure 3.6. Alfred Bollacher working on a tall ladder on the north wall of Medinet Habu, ca. 1930. Photo: E. DeLoach, Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

the summer would deteriorate, so the stock had to be reordered each season.[34] By 1927, they began to purchase photographic supplies from Kodak in London or Cairo. The artists' supplies were imported from Stanley in London.[35]

By the end of December 1925, the team had finished recording the long "Blessing of Ptah" text on the facade of the First Pylon and had begun a second collation of the Calendar.[36] Nelson, who admitted that his grasp of the Egyptian language and scripts was not of the highest caliber, reached out for additional help with the long and very difficult text. That December, he wrote Breasted that he wanted to send British Egyptologist Battiscombe Gunn blueprints of the Calendar text, while Alan Gardiner continued to give his advice on collation.[37]

As soon as the first season, Nelson realized they were understaffed, writing that "we could keep three draughtsmen employed on the work very easily," and he asked that John Wilson be sent out as an epigrapher. The next season, Nelson reported optimistically that artist "Bollacher is now going along faster than he did last season. In the first place the most difficult scenes are now completed, and in the second place he is on to the hang of the work as he was not last year."[38]

Bollacher's skills were greatly admired, but early on he developed a reputation for being "difficult," a trait that grew over the years (see "Life at the Old Chicago House" in chapter 11). Nelson noted that it would be very hard to have another artist work with Bollacher on the same plate because "I believe he would resent the idea very strongly." But more positively, he remarked that Bollacher's work was so good "that anyone else's would be a bad contrast."[39]

It did not help matters that when Bollacher arrived in Luxor he spoke no English, while Nelson's German was not very proficient and Libbie Nelson spoke none at all.

Photographer Hartman was also making progress. In December 1925, Nelson reported: "Hartman is working in the back of the temple and is piling up negatives rapidly. He said he will have completed the whole temple by some time in January, if not before the end of the month."[40]

The sequence of their labors and the coordination of the steps took some working out. As they began documenting the huge temple calendar on the south external wall, Nelson wrote to Breasted, "There is no need of waiting till all the collation is finished before beginning the draughting of the inscriptions. For instance, most of the Calendar could be done at any time now without waiting for the collation. So could the long inscriptions in the First Court and the two long inscriptions on the First Pylon between the flagstaff recesses. I have already, this last summer, prepared my tracings of these as far as they could be made out from the photographs. It only remains to go over the doubtful passages."[41]

At the end of two seasons, the Survey, and Nelson personally, continued to face criticism from Gardiner. In early August 1926, Nelson wrote, "I took dinner with Gardiner and enjoyed a very pleasant chat with him. He was very cordial and offered to do all that he could to help along our enterprise. It was evident, however, that he felt more than doubtful of the scientific accuracy of our work if it is left to our staff alone. That did not include yourself." Gardiner was still "very anxious" to add de Buck to the staff for six weeks. In the meantime, he made a helpful but condescending offer that Nelson spend May in London "when he and de Buck and myself could get together and read through carefully the material for our first volume, studying it philologically. I could then, the following autumn, look up any suggestions on the wall and we would be ready to print that winter."[42] Nelson exhibited his usual calm demeanor and dedication to the project, commenting that "six weeks with Gardiner would be of great advantage to me and to the work also." But he asked Breasted to work on other solutions that did not include so much well-meaning but critical outside help: "It is obvious we shall have to do our own collating as Gardiner will not have time. I was hoping that you and I, this coming season while you are at Kurna, could read through our material for a certain stated period each day. I am preparing a translation as I go along, but it has not been very systematically done in the more or less distracted conditions in which I have so far worked. I hope you will be able to do this reading with me."[43]

By the end of the 1925 season, the operations were reevaluated. First, Nelson realized that the scale of the photographs was much too small to record the detail on the wall, concluding that "we must scrap the work of the first two seasons and redraw the plates on a larger and more adequate scale which would make them paleographically, archaeologically, and artistically as final and complete a record of the entire original wall as human fallibility could reasonably expect to attain."[44]

On November 24, 1925, Breasted advised Nelson that he was "seriously looking at additions to our staff."[45] This pattern of Breasted (and later his son Charles) sending staff to Chicago projects without consulting the field director was unfortunately common—the field directors of the Megiddo Expedition and Luxor's Architectural Survey both received unsolicited staff members. Gardiner's criticism about the quality of the epigraphy may have been a factor in Breasted's increasing the staff of Egyptologists in order to have the collations more rigorously cross-checked, which in turn meant engaging more artists.

A New Start, 1926

Two years of experimentation proved that the university's commitment to "making our facsimiles a complete and final record of the original wall, including both reliefs and inscriptions," would

Figure 3.7. Caroline Ransom Williams at work at Medinet Habu, 1926. Photo: Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Figure 3.8. John Wilson holding the drawings for what would be published as *Medinet Habu* I, April 17, 1928. Photo: Edgerton Archive, Epigraphic Survey.

require essentially starting over with a larger staff and new procedures.

The epigraphic staff for 1926 consisted of Caroline Ransom Williams (fig. 3.7), John Wilson (fig. 3.8), and William Edgerton, all former students of Breasted's. The addition of three epigraphers was a mixed blessing for Nelson: it gave him the staff needed to ensure the accuracy of the facsimiles, but it removed him further from the scientific work that had attracted him to the project in the first place. Yet even the additional epigraphers did not mollify Gardiner, who voiced a "gloomy expectation" over Edgerton's appointment.[46] He again advocated for de Buck to be appointed.

John Hartman, the Epigraphic Survey's Austrian photographer, who had worked with Breasted since the start of the Coffin Texts Project in 1922, died in Cairo in December 1926. He had played an indispensable role in the logistics of the Chicago House expansion, and he was well liked by Nelson.*

* Nelson wrote, "I miss him very much all the time, both in the work and personally, for I have become very much attached to him" (Nelson to Breasted, 7 December 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 704). Hartman died of liver disease brought on by drinking Nile water. He left a widow and three children, the youngest a three-year-old boy. The Nelsons paid tuition for Hartman's daughter to attend the American Mission School in Cairo for the next year. The Hartman family lived in Luxor in a house on the corniche road near the site of today's hospital. Hartman's successor, Leichter, later lived in the same house. The location of the house is known from a hand-drawn map of Luxor in the possession of the Egypt Exploration

Nelson contracted with Henry Leichter of Luxor to do some photography in Hartman's absence; then, for the 1927 season, Nelson relied on Olaf Lind of the University of Chicago's Megiddo Expedition.[47]

In 1926, Nelson, having turned to a pool of Italian artists who had been employed by the Survey Department of the Egyptian government, hired Virgilio Canziani, whom Breasted described to Nelson as "probably the best draughtsman the Department ever had." Canziani would stay with the Survey through 1939. Nelson reserved Bollacher "for the final work and for all the more exacting sculptures."[48]

Breasted also acknowledged that they needed a librarian for the new library. Breasted and Nelson considered hiring an epigrapher's or artist's wife, but Nelson recalled "two very disagreeable situations" at the American University of Beirut where it proved impossible to correct the librarian, "as the husbands generally take the part of the wives."[49] In May 1926, Breasted approached Rosalind Moss, who, in collaboration with Bertha Porter since 1924, had been compiling what became the *Topographical Bibliography*. By July, however, Moss declined the invitation to catalog the new library because of her prior commitment to the bibliography project. Breasted suggested that new staff member John Wilson, who was enthusiastic about the work, could catalog the library, and that splitting his time between the walls and the library would "be the best kind of training for him." But Nelson expressed dislike for "taking [Wilson's] time for cataloging when the epigraphic side of our activities needs him." Later that year, Phoebe Byles was hired as librarian and assistant to Nelson, a position she held until 1936.

More staff meant an expansion of the field headquarters (see chapter 11, "Old Chicago House, 1924–1940"). All these changes meant a much heavier administrative burden for Nelson, and a great portion of the correspondence between Nelson and Breasted in 1926 and 1927 deals with details of the expansion of the house rather than the scientific work—a distraction that Nelson increasingly resented and was to complain about. The expansion was especially pressing because Bollacher, Wilson, and Edgerton all wanted to bring their wives to Luxor (see "Life at the Old Chicago House" in chapter 11).

With the new staff came a new epigraphic method that introduced two major changes.* First, the timing of when the artist and the epigrapher participated was reversed. Rather than Nelson making his epigraphic comments on the photograph, then passing it to the artist, the photograph now went straight to an artist, who took it to the wall and penciled what he saw. Back in the studio at Chicago House, the drawing was inked, and then the photo was bleached to leave just the ink drawing, which was contact-printed to make a blueprint positive.

Second, collation sheets were introduced. The blueprint was cut into small pieces, usually about 4″ × 5″, and each piece was mounted on a larger sheet of paper to allow ample space for annotations. These sheets passed through the hands of the epigraphers, who added their comments. At the end of the collation process, the epigraphers met at the wall to resolve disagreements and summarize their corrections. The artist then added the information from the collation sheets to the drawing, producing a facsimile of the wall (see appendix B).

Along with this new process, the conventions for portraying text or relief that were experimented with in 1924–26 were further developed and systematized. Restorations of entire signs, or parts of signs, were added in dotted lines. Indications of modeling of figures and hieroglyphs were not recorded because they "would entail a prohibitive amount of labor and would result in very doubtful success. Only in cases where some special end

Society (EES) in London. I thank Stephanie Boonstra of the EES and Brett McClain for bringing it to my attention.

* Charles Nims, Survey field director in later years, credited the changes primarily to Ransom Williams (*AR* 1973–74, 8).

was to be gained has any effort been made to indicate in our drawings the plasticity of the original sculpture." There was no indication whether the relief was raised or sunk—a convention that came only in later years. Gouges (cupules) and missing plaster were noted. Block lines were indicated by light hatching. In scenes that preserved earlier and later versions of decoration, only one version was recorded on the drawing; the other was to be noted in the "volume of notes to be published later."[50] Unfortunately, the translation (with commentary) of the texts in *Medinet Habu* I and II did not appear until 1936,[51] and text-commentary volumes were not published for the following five volumes. This modified epigraphic system, relying on multiple collations by different individuals, was followed with some modifications for the next ninety years.

Even with the new procedures implemented, Gardiner was still critical. In August 1926, Nelson reported to Breasted that Gardiner had said Bollacher's drawings of the hieroglyphs did not conform "to the proper canons of paleographic accuracy" and "the exact form of each separate sign" should be recorded.[52] Here Gardiner was perhaps applying the same standards to the temple work as to the projects of Nina and Norman de Garis Davies, who were producing facsimiles of tomb paintings, for which Gardiner was an advisor. Nelson responded that although "Bollacher is impatient of too careful attention in their forms . . . Canziani will in the end do better with the hieroglyphs than Bollacher does."[53]

Both Edgerton and Wilson returned to Luxor in the fall for the 1927 season. To Breasted's disappointment, Ransom Williams, whose skills as an epigrapher were highly valued, had that summer accepted a teaching position in Michigan and a curatorial post in Toledo.* But overall, the Luxor staff had grown with the arrival of the Architectural Survey in 1926 (see chapter 4, "Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926–1936"). John Anthony Chubb, an artist and photographer (fig. 3.9), joined the staff in 1927, and the following year, artist Laurance Longley came to Luxor. In October 1928 (fig. 3.10), Arthur Q. Morrison replaced photographer Olaf Lind.[54] In 1929, Keith Seele joined the

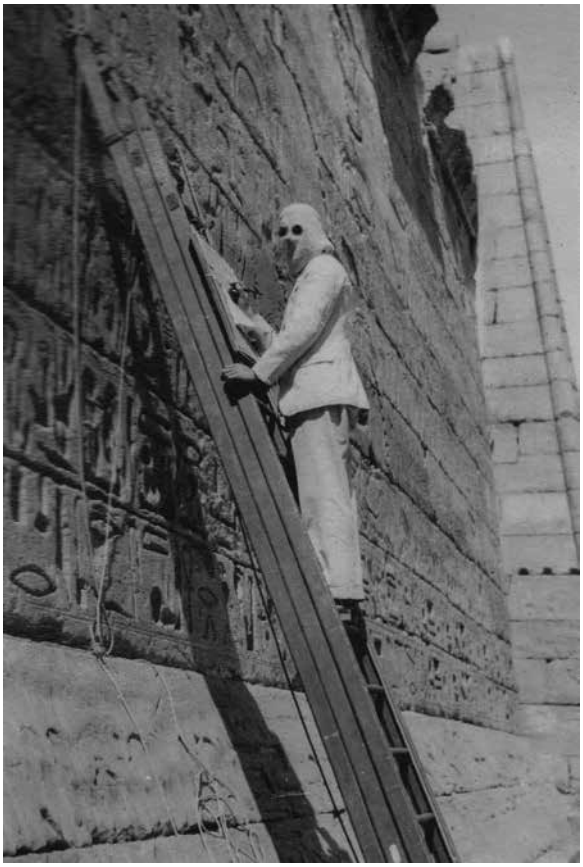

Figure 3.9. Artist J. Anthony Chubb in a protective "fly mask" working on the north exterior wall of Medinet Habu, ca. 1930. Photo: Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

* Breasted stayed in close touch with Ransom Williams, and on August 18, 1927, he wrote that he was keeping her on the staff list of the University because "we are looking forward with hope to your return to our work in Egypt at such intervals as you find feasible"; K. L. Sheppard, ed., "*My Dear Miss Ransom . . .": Letters between Caroline Ransom Williams and James Henry Breasted, 1898–1935* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018), 194 [0171]. She spent part of the 1935 season with the Sakkarah Expedition, continuing her research on the use of color in Old Kingdom mastabas. See also Nelson to Breasted, 12 December 1926, ISAC Museum Archives; Sheppard, "*My Dear Miss Ransom*," 190–94 [0168–69].

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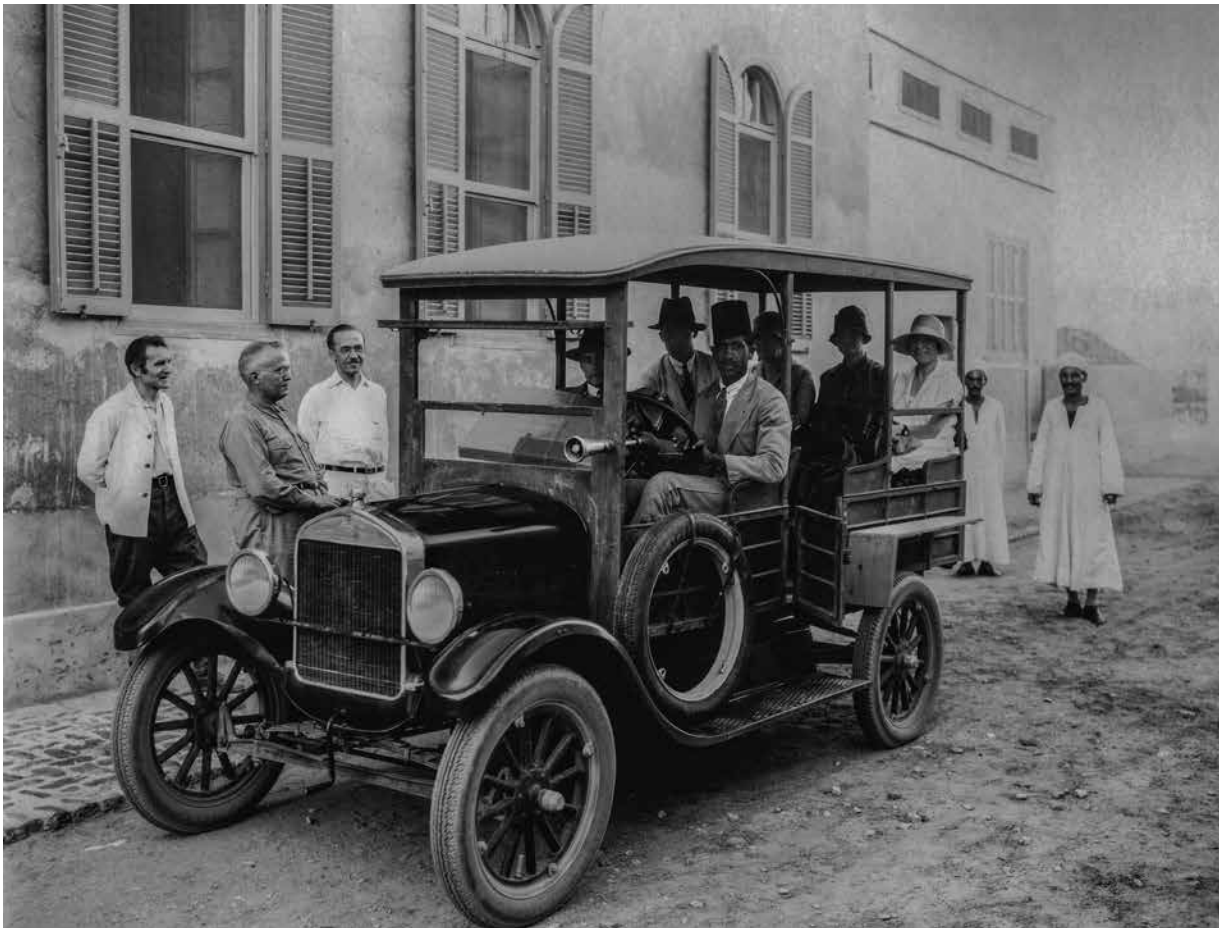

Figure 3.10. Staff of the 1928 season. Left to right: Alfred Bollacher, Harold Nelson, William Edgerton. In car, front: John Wilson, J. Anthony Chubb, Iliya Gabriel; rear: Libbie Nelson, Mary Wilson, Jean Edgerton. Behind car: unidentified staff member, Mahmoud. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

epigraphic staff, and Edgerton returned to Chicago to join the faculty of the Oriental Institute.

Considering that the work from the first two seasons was discarded, it was impressive that by the end of the 1926 season, Nelson reported he had written much of the introduction to *Medinet Habu* I. Although the (re)photography of the volume was not yet complete, having been delayed by bad weather, he reported that "11 whole plates were ready for the printer and parts of several others. On the remaining plates little remains to be done, with one exception all the first collations having been entered."[55]

Breasted and Nelson were acutely aware that their publication would be held to a high standard and so had to be beyond scholarly reproach—"It is quite evident that, when our first volume comes out, it is going to be subjected to more than the usual scrutiny by both our British and German friends"—lest they be dismissed as an overfunded group that was experimenting with a largely untried technique.*

By the end of 1929, Nelson could report that they had finished twenty-one battle reliefs of the

* Nelson to Breasted, 2 August 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 766. In his review of *Medinet Habu* I and II (*JEA* 20 [1934]: 123), T. E. Peet commented, "Some of those who saw these [drawings] in progress may have doubted whether the method could ever be wholly satisfactory."

Libyan, Nubian, and northern campaigns on the exterior of the temple and in the First and Second Courts, and two long historical texts in the First Court. He estimated that this material would make up thirty-five plates of *Medinet Habu* I (*Earlier Historical Inscriptions of Ramses III*), and that some would appear in volume II. He also reported, "Along with the preparation of the plates has gone the writing of a textual commentary as well as a commentary on the reliefs, both of which are well advanced and, it is hoped, will appear shortly after the volume of plates."*

Medinet Habu Studies, 1928/29 (OIC 7, 1930) contained Uvo Hölscher's report on his excavations and John Wilson's on the "Language of the Historical Texts Commemorating Ramses III." The omission of a report by Nelson about the overall work of the Survey is puzzling, although it was probably due to the administrative load that kept him from his scientific work. Breasted's foreword announced the imminent appearance of *Medinet Habu* I.

Expansion of the Work, 1930

By 1930, Breasted's vision for expanding the work of the University of Chicago in Egypt was in full flower. The Survey began work at the Ramesses III temple at Karnak that July, at the Bubastite Portal in April 1931, at the Khonsu Temple in 1935, and at the Hypostyle Hall in 1938 (see chapter 5, "The Move to Karnak, 1930–"). A further concession was granted by the Service des Antiquités to the "Luxor Epigraphic and Architectural Expedition" on July 10, 1931.[56] An associated expedition at Saqqara started in November 1931. Overall, in the 1930s, the work of the Survey expanded from Medinet Habu to the east bank monuments, and it seemed as though Chicago was everywhere.

Although that amount of work would seem like more than enough for the group, Breasted and Nelson discussed adding a new project, at Behbeit el-Hagar in the Delta. Both staff Egyptologist Siegfried Schott and Hölscher were great advocates of the site, the former stressing its importance for Egyptian religion. In late August 1931, Nelson and Schott visited Behbeit el-Hagar. Nelson reported back favorably to Breasted, suggesting it would complement the Luxor program well because they could work in the Delta when the Theban area was too hot, thereby operating the Survey eight or nine months of the year.[57] Breasted was enthusiastic about the possibility, responding, "You will recall that I have mentioned several times in my letters my regret that the expedition is necessarily obliged to operate on such a short season.† Consequently I would be very much pleased if we could put the expedition at work for a couple of months every spring after operations have been closed down at Luxor."[58] Perhaps luckily for the Survey's progress in Luxor, the plans for work in the Delta did not advance.

Working at both Medinet Habu and Karnak necessitated an even larger staff, a group that was accommodated in the spacious new Chicago House that opened in April 1931 (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–"). The expansion of the staff and the new house created an even larger administrative burden for Nelson. By 1928, he was assisted by a full-time accountant and house/business manager, Ilyas Khuri of Beirut.

The epigraphic/Egyptology staff stood steady in most years at four (including Nelson). Seele had joined the staff in fall 1929, and Rudolf Anthes and Siegfried Schott arrived in fall 1931. The number of artists also increased; there were six in the 1931, 1932, 1934, and 1935 seasons, which made it difficult for the epigraphers to keep up with their output.

* H. H. Nelson, *Medinet Habu, 1924–28* (OIC 5) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), 19. *Historical Records of Ramses III: The Texts in* Medinet Habu *Volumes I and II* (SAOC 12) appeared under the authorship of Edgerton and Wilson in 1936, six years after *Medinet Habu* I and four years after *Medinet Habu* II.

† The six-month field season of the Epigraphic Survey was already an anomaly. Most foreign missions (other than the French Institute in Cairo) operated for weeks, or perhaps a month or two, at a maximum.

Predictably, splitting the team between Karnak and Medinet Habu slowed progress at the original site. In fall 1930, Nelson reported, "If it was not for the Karnak job, we could finish not only Volume Two but Volume Three [of Medinet Habu] this season."* Early in the 1931 season, Nelson reported that only Edgerton was working at Medinet Habu, while six draftsmen were at Karnak. It is not clear how the work on both sides of the Nile was organized and prioritized, but in late October 1931, Nelson commented that once the floodwater receded and the roads were open, he would transfer four of the artists back to Medinet Habu, but thereafter he would "transfer the men from Medinet Habu to Karnak from time to time to give them a little change and hope in this way to keep the work going properly." This plan posed logistical problems, however, because he did not have enough transportation on the west bank to transfer the whole team each day.[59]

In early 1932 Nelson wrote to Breasted, "Half the season is past, and still we have not begun work at Medinet Habu. This state of affairs has arisen from the difficulties we have encountered with the badly destroyed reliefs at Karnak, which have consumed more time than we anticipated. Bollacher was ready to begin at Medinet Habu about a month ago, but he has been diverted to color work for Hoelscher and will not be free from that for another two weeks yet. Canziani will begin at M.H. in about a week and Chubb after two or three weeks."[60]

Work at the temple was slowed when, in February 1932, Nelson tripped and fell in the temple, broke his arm, tore a muscle in his leg, and gashed his head. He reported to Breasted:

> I only regret that my accident has left all collation for some time to come in the hands of Seele and Schott, for as health begins to return with the warmer weather, the work will become increasingly heavy. Neither Seele nor Schott is on the best of terms with the draughtsmen as their personalities rub people the wrong way. However, I have taken up that matter with both sides and things are now better. But I find that when I work along with the others I can keep matters smoother than otherwise. It will probably be six weeks at least before I can climb a ladder again. But meanwhile I shall be able to keep hold of the situation and trust that the results of the season's work will not be disappointing.[61]

In 1933, Nelson again warned Breasted that the work at Medinet Habu was being slowed by the other projects: "We shall have to cut off some time from Medinet Habu, but with so many drawings from Karnak ready it seems best to me to complete that volume rather than to have the plates lying here for another year. We should probably be able to finish the Treasury at Medinet Habu and a part of the feast scenes after completing Karnak. We're working hard and moving along well."[62] In a more jocular tone, he wrote to his chief in Chicago, "I want to finish Medinet Habu before I finish myself."[63] But in an earlier letter he had noted, "I see so many things that I would like to include in our publications that if we include them all we shall be here at Medinet Habu for ten years."[64] Little did he know how prophetic he was.

In spite of the awareness that the Survey was already spreading itself thin, the staff spent part of the 1934 season in the Small Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu. They completed drawings of half of the south wall of the ambulatory, using it a testing ground for new epigraphic conventions.[65] For unstated reasons, they did not continue the work there, and the Survey did not return to the Small Temple until 1979.

The Death of Breasted and the Depression, 1935

The year 1935 brought difficult times for the Survey. Breasted died suddenly in late December, but even before his death it was clear that lean times were ahead. In 1928, Rockefeller had

* *Medinet Habu* II was published in 1932 and *Medinet Habu* III in 1934. See also Nelson to Breasted, 10 October 1930, CHP 98; C. Breasted to Nelson, 7 October 1930, CHP 432; Breasted to Nelson, 7 October 1930, CHP 433.

committed funding for ten years, until June 30, 1939. But in 1936, Breasted's successor as Oriental Institute director, John Wilson, wrote to Nelson, "Since 1928, the economic situation has fundamentally changed. For some time, it has become increasingly clear that the Institute's future after 1939 was destined to reflect this change in a very marked degree. . . . Even before the Director's death we had a clear intimation that, insomuch as the American and world economic situation has changed so drastically, the Institute could not hope for continued support on the same scale as present. . . . Now a policy of retrenchment has been made virtually a condition of future support."[66] Wilson was forced to make very difficult decisions in marking all of Chicago's field projects—whether in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Turkey, or Syria—for either "contraction" or "excision." He informed Nelson, "Within a month or two the situation may so close down upon us that you will be our only operative field expedition."[67] He sought to convince the funders of the special conditions and importance of the Egyptian work: "We hope to hold the Luxor section of our work in a special category. We have there the Egyptian Headquarters (a term which we shall stress), permanent buildings with a well-equipped library, really an outpost of the University. This we shall present as of special nature."[68]

The financial problems manifested themselves in early 1934 when the United States government enacted the Gold Reserve Act, which resulted in a devaluation of the dollar. Nelson referred to his staff as "fifty-nine cent" men, after the current value of a dollar of their pay. He negotiated with Chicago for pay supplements and declared that he would try to effect savings in the daily operations and return some of that as supplements to the staff. This strategy created uncomfortable situations for Nelson because some Survey members, naturally concerned about their own pay, scrutinized his purchases, including those for the library, because they hoped to receive a portion of the reserves.[69]

In 1935 (fig. 3.11), the budget for the Epigraphic Survey was cut by 80 percent, and dramatic cuts in operations and expenses were needed. Personnel were reduced to Nelson and a staff of three or four, and Wilson directed Nelson to "see what he [Nelson] can do about bringing the Epigraphic work to termination or to a radically reduced basis."[70] Of primary concern to Wilson was the publication of the work done so far: "Our chief concern in the next two or three years is the publication of the results of our extended activity over the past ten years. Whatever the future activity of the Oriental Institute may be, we have an obligation to publish the results of past activity."[71]

Staffing was further complicated by the transfer of Seele from Luxor to Chicago to fill the second chair of Egyptology vacated by Wilson, who had become the Oriental Institute's acting director (and, in 1936, would become its actual director).

In January 1937, Wilson wrote that the budget for the next season was cut to "a lamentably small" $7,000, and the staff was to consist of only Nelson, Leichter, and Longley—an incredible change from only a few years before, when six artists were on the team. Tim Healey and "other members of the staff" were not included.[72] Nelson made a valiant effort to trim costs and keep staff, especially Healey. Wilson trusted Nelson's administrative abilities and left the difficult decisions to him, leading to painful situations such as when, in February 1939, Wilson decided that only one epigrapher could be retained. He gave Nelson letters of dismissal addressed to Charles Nims and Richard Parker, instructing him to deliver one letter and destroy the other.[73]

In 1937, there were still four artists, but the number was reduced by one each year, leaving Stanley Shepherd as the sole artist in 1939, the last season before the Survey closed for World War II. Two Egyptologists worked with Nelson from 1937 to 1939, dropping to one (Parker) in 1939. The last season before the war, the staff consisted of Nelson, Parker, Shepherd, and photographer Henry

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Figure 3.11. Staff, spouses, and visitors in the courtyard, November or December 1935, shortly before Breasted's death. Standing left: Horatio Vester, Leslie Greener, Tim Healey, J. Anthony Chubb. Standing right: Virgilio Canziani, Ahmed (house staff), Henry Leichter, Siegfried Schott. Seated: Phoebe Byles, Doris Healey, Margaret Greener, Alice and Robert Martindale, Keith and Diederika Seele, Harold Nelson, James and Imogen Breasted, John and Mary Wilson, Martha Belknap (Nelson's secretary), Laurance Longley, Astrid Breasted. Upper story: Amelia (Melia) Baz Murhij (Nelson family nanny). Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Leichter,* almost the same level of staff as in 1924. Because of the dramatically smaller crew, Wilson and Nelson discussed selling the new Chicago House, then less than five years old, and moving back to the smaller and more affordable Gourna house (see chapter 11, "Old Chicago House, 1924–1940," and chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–").

In February 1937, Nelson submitted several cost-cutting proposals to Wilson, including working mainly at Karnak and reducing the time at Medinet Habu to two months of the season to save the expense of the west bank temple staff, the gasoline for the launch, and the extra car.[74]

The budget cuts and reevaluation of whether, and how, the Survey would continue coincided with changes in the personnel of the Service des Antiquités that also threatened the work. By 1936, Pierre Lacau, with whom Nelson had many contentious dealings, had retired, and true to tradition (and

* Leichter was an Austrian who lived in Luxor with his family in the same house on the corniche where previous Survey photographer John Hartman had lived. Leichter worked for the Survey from 1929 to 1940.

French and British influence), another Frenchman, Étienne Drioton, took his place.[75] Nelson expressed his relief: "The situation with the Department of Antiquities seems distinctly easier with the retirement of Lacau. Drioton, whom I saw in Cairo, is distinctly friendly to our work, as are the local authorities."[76] But problems soon arose as Drioton's assistant director, archaeologist Selim Hassan,* began to challenge his authority—reflecting the growing demand for the Egyptianization of the Antiquities Service.[77] In November 1936, Hassan visited Chicago House (and other missions) on a "charm offensive." Nelson wrote, "Salim Hasan called here the other day, the first time he has visited us. He was most cordial, overwhelmingly so. He assured me several times that the old days of obstruction were over and an entirely new era had begun. At least three times he said that, if we desired anything whatever from the Department, either a concession or anything else, we should merely write to Cairo and we could be sure that the answer would be 'Yes' by return post."[78]

Dealing with the Antiquities Service in this politically charged climate proved tricky, especially as a bitter rivalry arose between Hassan and Drioton, Nelson describing Hassan as a "thorn in [Drioton's] flesh."[79] Only a few months later, Nelson reported to Wilson:

> The situation in the Department of Antiquities is going from bad to worse. Salim Hasan is doing his best to elbow Drioton out and get the department in his own hands. In fact, he has already begun to issue orders without the knowledge of his superior. . . . Hasan's cordiality towards us when he was here this autumn he has expended to practically all of the archaeologists up and down the country, evidently with the purpose of showing them how much better they would find conditions were he in charge of the Department than otherwise. It is all very disheartening and bodes no good for the future. I do not think we would have any trouble with Hasan, but one never knows. I get along well with Egyptians and so far they have been cordiality itself.[80]

Alarm was rising among many of the foreign missions about the possible transition of the Service to Egyptian control and both the cancellation of their permits and the transfer of their excavations to Egyptians. In November 1937, Alan Gardiner, always a staunch believer in European control, wrote that Walter Emery, Jean-Philippe Lauer, and Gustave Jéquier† all had "been dismissed from the Service" and that "Gauthier is already out and Engelbach's post [at the Egyptian Museum] is threatened."‡ Nelson demurred at Gardiner's request that Chicago join an international protest to "persuade our State Department to do anything," but apparently the appeal was successful because Wilson reported, "Since I last wrote to you about the antiquities situation in Egypt I have a letter from the Department of State saying that they will conduct an investigation in Cairo."[81] In late December 1937, European colleagues continued to organize a protest, as Wilson advised Nelson, "I have a letter . . . from Gardiner saying that Boreux and Moret§ are drawing up an international statement for Egyptologists to sign." The Chicago group was more cautious, with Wilson commenting, "I have promised the State Department not to subscribe to anything which will excite nationalistic feelings in Egypt against American archaeology. However, I shall be very much interested to see this statement or protest when it does arrive. In the face of contradictory reports from Egypt, it is not easy to foresee the correct activity on my part or yours. I shall have to move diplomatically."[82] On his part, Nelson replied, "I am taking this as a matter in which

* Often referred to as Salim Hasan in the correspondence.

† Walter B. Emery, British archaeologist for the Egypt Exploration Society; Jean-Philippe Lauer, French architect who spent his career studying and restoring the Djoser pyramid complex at Saqqara; and Gustave Jéquier, Swiss Egyptologist.

‡ Henri Gauthier, French Egyptologist; and Reginald Engelbach, British Egyptologist and assistant and later keeper of the Egyptian Museum, 1924–41.

§ Charles Boreux and Alexandre Moret, both French Egyptologists.

each scholar will act as he sees fit and there is no pressure on any man."[83]

To Nelson's and others' relief, in early January 1939, Drioton secured the renewal of the foreigners' contracts. That same month, it was Hassan who was out of a position, stripped of his excavation permits at Giza, Saqqara, and Zagazig and under investigation for politically motivated charges of "fraud and maladministration."[84]

Under the careful financial stewardship of Oriental Institute director John Wilson, the Survey continued its work, although on a reduced basis. In November 1936, Nelson was able to report, "The spirit of the household seems so far to be very good. Everyone is joining in cheerfully and accepting economies with a good will. We have arranged for the men to go across to Medinet Habu only in the mornings, which means a savings on car fuel and enables us to do with only one chauffeur." Nelson also shuffled his staff: since the ladder men had nothing to do in the afternoon after the team returned to the house, some of them became impromptu gardeners.[85]

By 1937, they were again working at both Medinet Habu and Karnak. However, they were so involved at Karnak that Medinet Habu seemed to be a lesser priority. Nelson wrote to Wilson, "The more I see of the material at Karnak, the more I feel that it should be published as soon as possible, and working here alone would be less expensive than working on both sides of the river each season."[86]

Even with the reduced crew, Nelson reported progress. In November 1936, he wrote that they were back at Medinet Habu: "Longley is completing the last portion of the Sokar Feast and Canziani is on the lower register of the north half of the east wall of the Second Court. I believe, if nothing unforeseen happens, we shall have almost all the drawing done for the next Medinet Habu volume before the end of the next season." Leichter was rephotographing the rear of the temple, which Nelson had decided to "publish in photograph as far as possible. We must have some line drawings of details or, occasionally, of whole scenes which are too badly injured to produce in photograph only."[87]

In January 1938, Nelson reported further progress at Medinet Habu, with Canziani working on the vividly colored scenes on the terrace of the Second Court and Shepherd drawing the reliefs and long texts in the Re Chapel; Shepherd also completed the Sokar Chapel that season.[88] But shortly after, in February, Nelson wrote to Wilson expressing his doubts about the progress they were making in combining drawings and photos, and he argued that relying more on photos, although "not ideal," would be "infinitely" less expensive.[89]

Budget constraints continued to dog their progress. In 1938, Nelson expressed his concern to Wilson about staffing and retaining valuable members of the survey: George Hughes and Richard Parker "are men who should not be lost to Egyptology." Charles Nims, by contrast—and ironically, considering the role he was to play in later years—was judged to be "a good epigrapher, but he goes very little beyond that. I therefore thought it necessary to warn him before too much time had elapsed that his future was not at all certain."[90]

The War Years

By October 1939, Wilson correctly forecast that by the end of the year, the Epigraphic Survey would be the sole expedition of the Oriental Institute.*

* The last ones were the Persian Expedition under Eric Schmidt, which closed at the end of December 1939, and the Megiddo Expedition, which operated with a skeleton staff into fall 1939. See E. H. Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon: The Search for the Lost City of Solomon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 308. See also a letter from Wilson to Nelson (11 December 1939, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1883) for the circumstances of the closure of the Iranian and Palestinian operations and the potential start of work at Tell Halaf. Wilson optimistically wrote, "Our job is oriental research, and we will stick to that until we are finally stopped." See also Wilson to Nelson, 25 October 1939, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1880.

Nelson nevertheless made preparations for a 1940 season, issuing contracts for Leichter, Shepherd, and Healey.[91] But the Survey was forced to close that April and did not reopen until October at the start of the 1946 season, although Harold and Libbie Nelson spent the 1945 season preparing the house for the staff.

Nelson began readying for the mission's closure in 1939 and started transferring his professional library to Chicago for safekeeping. In May he left Luxor with most of the family's personal possessions, returning to Chicago with nineteen pieces of luggage and eight crates of household effects.[92] The following year, as the political situation looked even more unstable, he transferred "all the records possible," along with a further twenty-one pieces of baggage, to Chicago. This undertaking was complicated by all the photos and "other material" having to pass by the censors in Cairo before they could leave the country.[93] Nelson stayed in Chicago for the duration of the war, while the staff dispersed to their homes and many of them to war work. The labors of the Survey were paused.

In 1941, Nelson was appointed acting director of the Oriental Institute to substitute for Wilson, who was in Washington, DC, with the Office of Strategic Services and later became the chief of the Division of Special Information. Typical of Wilson, he wrote a number of letters to Nelson to reassure him that Wilson would not be looking over his shoulder: "I want to reemphasize the point that I now stand in advisory capacity, and the show is yours to run."[94] Nelson's time was devoted to purely administrative duties, and he was reappointed acting director in May 1942. Wilson returned to Chicago in July 1943; that November, Nelson retired from administration of the Oriental Institute. He was sent off with a surprise party in the director's office on November 24, complete with a printed program studded with sly Egyptological jokes, and Institute members conferred on him the degree of "Life, Prosperity and Health."

The Publication of *Medinet Habu—Volumes I, II, III,* and *IV*

Just as the photographic and epigraphic processes evolved, so did plans for publishing the work. Breasted decided that the Medinet Habu epigraphic volumes would appear in the Oriental Institute Publications series, for which he would serve as editor. In 1924, Breasted proposed to Nelson, "The volumes on the Theban temples, for which you would do the field work, would appear with your name as the leading author, provision being perhaps necessary also for the insertion after the words 'assisted by' or 'with the cooperation of' of the name of someone who may have been doing a good deal of heavy work in collation, proof reading, and so forth, at home, in addition to what I would be doing myself."[95]

Breasted originally envisioned a "Temple Series" that would include only these epigraphic drawings. The translations would appear in the Ancient Records series that he had initiated in 1906 with his five volumes of Egyptian texts. But Nelson recognized that photographs—rather than serving only as a tool for producing the drawings—had to be an essential part of the presentation. Mere weeks after the team began work in 1924, he wrote to Breasted:

> What are we to do about the reliefs? If they are reproduced merely in line drawings on the photographs, as we propose to do with the hieroglyphics, I am afraid that the result will be very dead, without the spirit of the original. The Deir el-Bahari publications have, it seems to me, excellent reproductions of reliefs. Will it not be possible for us to have a certain number of photographic reproductions in the publication giving the finer scenes, as well as the line drawings? As the line drawings will have to be made in any case, this matter can wait till later.[96]

Some of the early discussions now seem almost ludicrous, considering the final product. During the first week of the first season, Breasted suggested that the page size had to be large enough to print an 8″ × 10″ photograph, and like Nelson, he initially wished to avoid folded plates because of their tendency to tear on the fold line. Gardiner suggested they follow the format of the Service des Antiquités publications on the excavations at Saqqara, which measured 10⅜″ × 12⅞″.[97] At that time, Breasted forecast that "probably five volumes" would be required for the reliefs and texts.[98]

The scope of the publication was also a matter of discussion; as Nelson wrote to Breasted, "I presume we intend to publish the whole temple complex, the gateway, the Thutmose III temple, the Amenartis Temple and all."[99] As the publications started to take shape, Nelson expressed his concerns to Breasted: "Our work here at Medinet Habu keeps increasing in possibilities till I am sometimes troubled to know just where to draw the line. We do not want to produce the first two or three volumes on a scale that has to be curtailed in later volumes."[100] In August 1929, Nelson's suggestion that the volumes have consecutive pagination of the plates (including the frontispiece) was accepted by Breasted.[101]

There was considerable experimentation about the printing process to use. Initially, the color was to be done in Amsterdam by the Van Leer company using the zincotype process, but the proof received in July 1929 led them to switch to Ganymed in Berlin, which was using the collotype process.[102] The procedure was to print the color plates "as soon as possible after the original painting is available," which meant that these plates were printed long before the rest of the book. They were then sent to London, where they were run through the press again to print the plate number and the legend.[103] The black-and-white plates were printed from glass-plate negatives by Whittingham & Griggs (a division of Chiswick Press) in London. The plates were tipped into the binding on linen tape.

The question whether photographs should be included in the publications arose again in 1929 as *Medinet Habu* I was being designed and laid out. By then, Nelson had changed his mind: in early November, he commented that the photos were "distinctly supplementary" to the drawings because, he wrote, they "are not designed, except in a general way, for comparison with the drawings. I imagine that very few persons will, except at first to verify the accuracy of our work, compare the drawings with the photographs." The drawings "constituting the main body of the work" represented, he declared, the "new and most valuable part, a unit in itself." He further commented, "The cumulative effect of the successive plates, carrying on the series of events through the three campaigns, will be greatly marred if they are separated by several plates of photographs." The "photos designed not for comparison with the drawings, but to bring out certain points" could be grouped at the back of the book because they would be "presented in the commentary."[104] An additional difficulty was that the "commentary" that would address the details of the scenes never appeared, making some of them, such as "drawing of the disk from the trappings of the king's horse" (pl. 25A), intriguing mysteries.

Breasted replied to Nelson's comments about the organization of *Medinet Habu* I: "My idea was to make easier a comparison between the drawings and the photographic facsimiles of details, but if all details are relegated to a coherent group at the end the comparison will probably not be more difficult than if the photographic facsimiles followed directly upon the drawings."[105] A few days later, Nelson replied in agreement: "I can readily see that it is desirable to have the photograph of any given scene as near the drawing as possible."[106]

The final version of *Medinet Habu* I reflects a rather unsatisfactory sorting out of format. Although many photographs appear before the corresponding drawings, in several cases they do not, and some drawings have no supporting photograph, even as a detail (pls. 17, 24, 26, 35, 44). Many

of the drawings have photo details rather than a view of the entire scene, but very often they are widely separated; in some cases, the number of the plate for a corresponding drawing or photo is not in the plate's legend or the Table of Contents.* The corresponding photos and drawings also can be widely separated. For example, the photo for drawing plate 11 appears on plate 45A, and the photos for drawing plates 37–39 and 41 (of the Sea Peoples) appear on plates 50B, C, D; 51A, E, F; 52A, B; and 53F.

After a six-year interval without the appearance of a final publication, a time lag that drew Lacau's attention and criticism (see chapter 5, "The Move to Karnak, 1930–," and chapter 9, "Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition, 1930–1936"), *Medinet Habu—Volume I*: *Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (OIP 8) appeared in July 1930.† The subtitle reflects how its scope had changed from Nelson's plan in 1925 that it would cover "the entire outside of the building" to focus on the earlier historical records of Ramses III.[107] Its format (60 × 48 centimeters) was the largest that the Oriental Institute was ever to use, and it was used again only for the Abydos volumes. It included eighteen enormous double sheets, each 60 × 92 centimeters and mounted on a linen tape that was captured by the binding. The print run was 500 copies, and the book was bound by the University of Chicago Press. It lists Edgerton, Wilson, and Ransom Williams as the epigraphers; Bollacher, Canziani, and Chubb as the artists; and Morrison, Lind, and Hartman as the photographers.

The volume was widely and overall positively reviewed in the academic press, especially since it was the first such publication to be done on the basis of photographs rather than tracings. As T. Eric Peet wrote in his very favorable review, "Some of those who saw these in progress may have doubted whether the method could ever be wholly satisfactory and would not have been surprised if after all it had been abandoned in favour of the more clumsy method of tracing." He also commented that he could not judge the philological value of the volumes until the accompanying text appeared. René Dussaud praised the "impeccable reproduction" of the reliefs, calling the publication "simply admirable."[108]

Medinet Habu—Volume II: Later Historical Records of Ramses III (OIP 9) appeared in 1932. It contained seventy-six plates, numbered consecutively from *Medinet Habu* I, and included thirty-eight photos (including details), sixty-eight drawings, nine color paintings, six reinforced photos, and six text figures. The book had the same large format (60 × 48 centimeters) as the previous volume. The color plates were again printed by Ganymed in Germany,‡ and the black-and-white plates were by Chiswick Press in London, although they carried no "Printed in Great Britain" credit as they did in *Medinet Habu* I. There was no foreword or preface, but this volume had more complete cross-references between photos, drawings, and details. The staff list is given as Seele and Wilson (epigraphers); Bollacher, Canziani, Chubb, Longley, and Donald Wilber (artists); and Leichter and Morrison (photographers).

Nelson and Breasted discussed the introduction of a folded plate for the photograph of the entire south side of the First Court, deciding that the cost was not exorbitant even after adding a strip of reinforcing cloth to the fold.[109] Although that view of the temple was reproduced on a single, nonfolded sheet (pl. 59), the technique was

* For example, the cross-reference to plate 28 on plate 54C is found only in the legend of the later plate.

† Letter from Nelson to Breasted, 5 January 1930, CHP 25: "I trust the appearance of Volume I will satisfy the authorities on this occasion, and if we can have another volume of plates ready a year later, that will tide over the situation till Hoelscher finishes the dig. It would be very unfortunate if we were forced to publish prematurely."

‡ Plate 65 does not have a credit for Ganymed as do the other color plates.

used for the festival procession scenes in *Medinet Habu* IV.* Like *Medinet Habu* I, *Medinet Habu* II included many double spreads printed on 60 × 92 centimeter sheets.

Nelson expressed "great disappointment" in the binding of *Medinet Habu* II under the supervision of the Chiswick Press in London: "In the dry atmosphere of Egypt, the boards warped, and plates dropped out of the binding, but the worst of all is the fact that the plates will not open flat but are badly wrinkled. Altogether it is not a very satisfactory book to handle."[110]

There was some uncertainty whether the next volume would focus on the Calendar or the High Gate before *Medinet Habu—Volume III: The Calendar, the "Slaughterhouse," and Minor Records of Ramses III* (OIP 23) appeared in 1934. The format of this volume was smaller (48.5 × 38.0 centimeters), following the size that had been decided on for the Sakkarah Expedition publications, which in turn was inspired by the Metropolitan Museum's Robb de Peyster Tytus Memorial volumes. All the black-and-white plates were printed at Meriden Gravure in Connecticut, whose quality was judged to be better than that of any of the European printers. The color plates continued to be done by Ganymed in Berlin in advance of most of the rest of the book. As with earlier volumes, the color sheets were later run again through the press to add plate numbers and legends.

Medinet Habu III has a two-and-a-half-page preface, unsigned but surely by Nelson. It concerns the history and nature of the reliefs and texts but does not address epigraphic conventions. He wrote more, but it was apparently not ready when the publication went to press. That manuscript was found by George Hughes in Luxor in 1955 and sent to the Oriental Institute publications office in Chicago. He noted, "The work he had done toward a text volume for Vol. III of M.H. ought to be saved against any future work against it."[111]

Medinet Habu III has sixty-two plates (numbered 131–192). Many have multiple details or views, and as in the previous volumes, several are double spreads. There are also five text figures. The epigraphers were Schott, Seele, and Wilson, with Leichter as the sole photographer. Five artists are listed: Bollacher, Canziani, Chubb, Longley, and Wilber. They are credited with specific drawings in the List of Plates, but not in the legends of the plates themselves.

In 1938, Siegfried Schott, who had contributed a lengthy and important chapter, "The Feasts of Thebes," to *Work in Western Thebes, 1931–33* (OIC 18, 1934), wrote to Nelson offering to provide translations of the texts in *Medinet Habu* III and to incorporate them into a new source book (*Urkunden*) for feasts in Thebes. He mentioned that he had all the material and, with Nelson's permission, was eager to work on it, but nothing came of the proposed collaboration.[112]

Before publication, Nelson wrote to Breasted suggesting that they emphasize the role of the photos, yet simultaneously downplaying their importance:

> I have talked this matter over with Schott and Seele and we are of unanimous opinion that in view of the many minute details in the form of the hieroglyphs, which are of importance to men working with the document, it would be wise for us to publish detailed photographs of practically all the south wall of the temple. In this way we furnish scholars the only available check on our line drawings which it is possible for us to give. While I do not believe that anyone will secure any fresh data from the photographs thus published, and while the use of such photographs may often be misleading—as we know—we at any rate have satisfied all the demands that can be made upon us. We have, of course, more on our drawings than can be gathered from any photographs, and moreover, have checked and rechecked the drawings until it seems certain that

* Those sheets do not have linen reinforcement on the folds.

> there is very little indeed that anyone else could gather from a study of the original.[113]

Breasted responded simply, "The more I think of it, the more it seems necessary to publish the photographs along with the drawings."[114] His was the deciding call, for *Medinet Habu* III was the first to adopt the standard of presenting a photograph and its corresponding drawing sequentially to enable the reader to compare the two more easily. The cross-reference for the adjoining plate was also given in the photograph's legend.*

Medinet Habu—Volume IV: Festival Scenes of Ramses III, appeared as OIP 51 in 1940, in the same large format as *Medinet Habu* I and II to accommodate the enormous scale of the reliefs. The book has a scant page-and-a-half preface by Nelson that mainly addresses the festivals of Min and Sokar, which account for thirty-three of the fifty-seven plates. Other "miscellaneous" reliefs occupy the rest of the plates, including the scenes of the king offering to the gods on the doorways of the First Pylon, which were included in this larger-format volume because the following volumes were to have the smaller format of *Medinet Habu* III. The line drawings are attributed to the six artists (Bollacher, Canziani, Chubb, Longley, Shepherd, and Leslie Greener) in the List of Plates, but not on the plates themselves. All photos were by Leichter. There are eight color paintings (two by Longley and three each by Canziani and Bollacher).

In the midst of the 1937 budget cuts, Wilson and T. G. Allen reviewed the printing costs of the epigraphic volumes, and Wilson decided that savings could be made in both paper and binding by printing the plates on both sides, thereby lowering the cost of the volumes (with a print run of 500) from a projected $25 to $23 each.† He acknowledged that it would make a "psychological difference" to the reader, who "feels the presentation on one side only gives a greater dignity to the volume." Wilson regretted making the decision, knowing it would be a disappointment to Nelson.[115] Luckily, this change was not effected; in fact, *Medinet Habu* IV seems even more lavish. Some of the plates (for example, pl. 226) are enormous, approximately 166 centimeters wide and with double folds. The Chicago recommitment to publication on a enormous scale is evident in comparing plate 221 (black and white) with plate 222 (its color version). The former is run across two facing pages without a foldout, while the latter is presented at a larger size with a fold that adds 32.5 centimeters to its width.

Although it is stated that the book was "compiled and printed by the University of Chicago Press," the legend on the color plates states that they were the work of Ganymed in Berlin. As in the past, the color plates were printed long before the volume was finalized, then run through the press in Chicago to add the plate number and caption.

Richard Parker, George Hughes, and the Postwar Years, 1945–1963

Harold and Libbie Nelson spent the 1945 season preparing Chicago House so that the Epigraphic Survey could resume work in October 1946. The staff had spent the war in government service. Nims served as an army chaplain in France (1943–46), and Hughes, like Wilson, did intelligence work in Washington, DC. Most dramatic was Tim Healey's two-and-a-half-year experience in the British navy on transatlantic and Baltic patrols. He survived his ship's being sunk by a torpedo or mine, and being blown into the water, and, as Nelson wrote to Wilson, "the next thing he knew was when he woke up in hospital. He came out of it all without a scratch. He said he has had all the war he wants and never again for him."[116]

* A feature that was specifically mentioned in Peet's review of the volumes: *JEA* 20 (1934): 124.

† Equivalent in 2024 to $545 and $502, respectively.

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Figure 3.12. Epigraphic Survey staff with visitors in late 1946, the first year of full operations after the war. Standing, left to right: Charles Nims, George Hughes, Stanley and Alice Shepherd, Mark Hasselriis, Harold Nelson. Seated, left to right: Maurine Hughes, Libbie Nelson, Myrtle Nims, Gladys Parker, Michael and Richard Parker, Tim Healey, and guests Joseph L. Smith and Corinna Smith. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Oriental Institute director John Wilson managed to restore some of the budget, so the 1946 staff (fig. 3.12) included Harold Nelson as field director, Richard Parker as epigrapher, and Charles Nims as photographer/epigrapher. Stanley Shepherd returned along with new artists Douglas Champion and Mark Hasselriis, and Healey continued as indispensable engineer. Alice Shepherd attended to the library.

Hasselriis got off on the wrong foot by arriving months late, earning him the sobriquet "mythical creature. . . . Who we hope will appear on Luxor station platform before many moons."[117] Then, upon his arrival, he had a harrowing time in Cairo, where he was caught up in a riot. He did not work out professionally. Nelson reported that "his line is not good, is very uncertain, and does not follow correctly outline of the reliefs on the temple wall."[118] He also did not work out socially, and Nelson dismissed him partway through the season and temporarily replaced him with Alexander Floroff, who was to work with the survey for two months, return in 1950, and then stay for the next fifteen seasons.*

In anticipation of resuming work, books and some records were shipped back to Luxor, Nelson noting that the dictionary, the Survey's invaluable card catalog of lexical terms, "will certainly have to come back here as soon as possible."[119] In fact the

* Floroff had previously worked with George Reisner at Giza in the late 1930s and the 1940s; see P. Der Manuelian, *Walking among Pharaohs: George Reisner and the Dawn of Modern Egyptology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 682. See also *Archeological Newsletter*, March 1951; Hughes to Kraeling, 24 March 1950, ISAC Museum Archives.

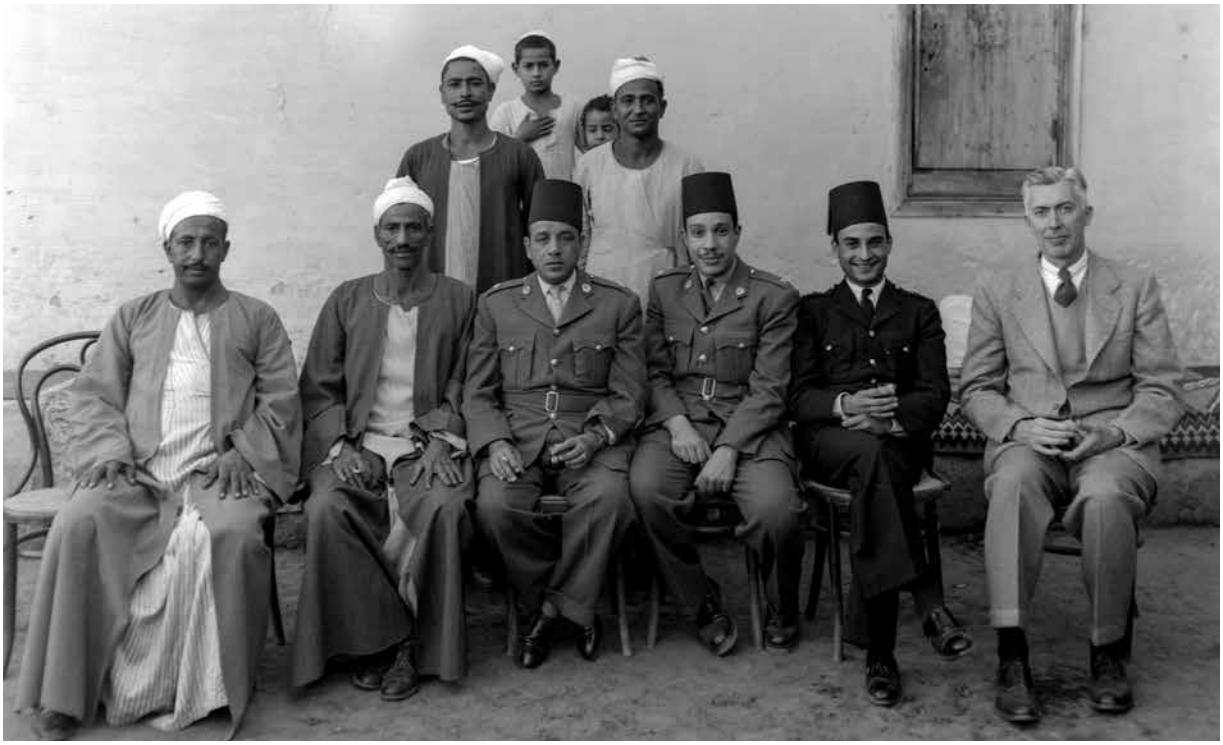

Figure 3.13. Field director Richard Parker (right) at a tea party at Karnak with officials, October 1948. Photo: C. Nims.

dictionary cards, packed in four trunks, were not returned until 1953.[120]

The 1946 season started with the artists at Khonsu Temple in Karnak and Nims undertaking the enormous project of checking the photo prints against the negatives to verify that parts of the temple were photographed. Nelson noted it was crucial that the files be in order, especially since he was soon leaving the Survey: "I knew where everything was and did not rely upon machinery to find anything. In fact, I see that I depended upon my memory too much, for now that someone else is taking over, my memory will no longer be available. I presume such a state of affairs has occurred often when one administration succeeds another."[121]

The Transition from Harold Nelson to Richard Parker, 1947-1948

The year 1946 saw the gradual transition of leadership from Nelson to Richard Parker (fig. 3.13). As early as 1937, when Parker was a graduate student in Chicago, Wilson had noted his leadership qualities; he wrote to Nelson that Parker was "the best rounded man we have and shows promise of diplomatic and executive ability."[122] In 1939, Nelson designated Parker as his unofficial and unannounced successor.[123] That season, Parker was given more administrative responsibility and authority over staffing. Although very supportive, Nelson privately criticized Parker's decision to have three epigraphers in the field, but by April 1947, Nelson was content to "let Parker run the show."* He admit-

* Nelson to Jacobsen, 19 April 1947, ISAC Museum Archives. One such decision concerned the addition of Egyptologist Miriam Lichtheim to the Luxor staff, an appointment promoted by Henri Frankfort. Oriental Institute director Jacobsen commented, "Personally, I can see disadvantages in appointing a woman as epigrapher and my immediate reaction is a negative one although, of course, I would follow your decision in such a matter." Parker demurred on the basis that he did not need another epigrapher and also she, as a "citizen of Palestine would be completely *persona non grata* with the Egyptians." After a brief absence from Chicago, Lichtheim worked on the

ted the transition was "not going to be entirely easy" for Parker, but he vowed to "keep his hands off and watch the wheels go around."[124]

The political situation in Egypt and the attitude toward foreign missions had changed as a result of the war, and it became more negative in November 1947 when the United Nations ratified the partition of Palestine. As Parker wrote, "You would be astonished at how Luxor, this remote provincial town, is in a ferment over the UN decision."[125] It became more difficult to obtain visas, as the government favored Egyptians for any available position.[126] Anti-British and anti-American riots in Cairo made the staff wary of the city. One note from 1948 referred to Egypt as "being at war." With the amount of "civil disturbance," "sudden and dangerous . . . hostility to Americans," and air raids in Cairo, the University of Chicago insisted on taking out special insurance for the staff. The heightened security carried over to the residence, and Parker complained that new regulations required all foreign guests to Chicago House to register with the local police.[127] In early 1947, the government decreed that all communications with the Ministry should be in Arabic, which Nelson regarded as a "nuisance" but for which he made arrangements for additional clerical help.[128]

In Parker's first season, 1947, the team worked at Medinet Habu, the Khonsu Temple, and the Bubastite Portal at Karnak. Although Chicago had high hopes for Parker as its new field director, by March 1948 he had accepted the post of the first Wilbour Professorship of Egyptology at Brown University, where he joined his colleague Otto Neugebauer.[129] Oriental Institute director Thorkild Jacobsen consulted with the Egyptologists in Chicago, and their choice for the next field director was George Hughes (fig. 3.14), who had served as an epigrapher since 1947. By that November, Parker reported that Hughes was "ready to take up the torch" on January 1, 1949.[130] Much of the work that season was dedicated to finishing the documentation of the Bubastite Portal at Karnak, since Ricardo Caminos was still on staff and he was a specialist in its texts.

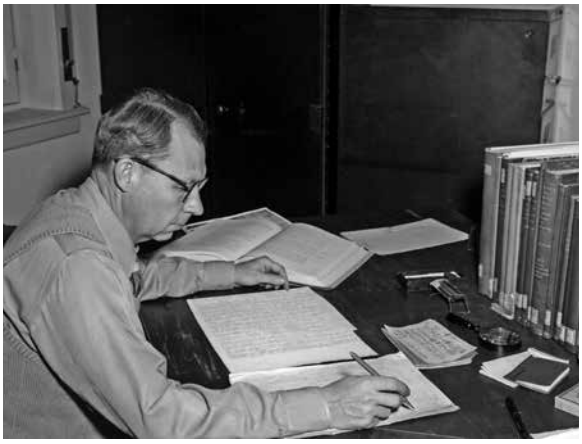

Figure 3.14. George R. Hughes, field director 1948–57 and 1959–63. Photo: C. Nims.

The Survey under George Hughes, 1948-1957 and 1959-1963

At the end of the 1948 season, Hughes reported to Wilson in Chicago that Medinet Habu was again the priority, as the current Karnak projects were wrapping up: "The Bubastite Gate is all but in the box on the way home. There is work yet to be done on some plates, but it is all laid out for Anderson* in Chicago this summer under the direction of Caminos and the rest of us."[131] Although he reported that they expected to finish the Opet scenes in the Court of the Khonsu Temple in a "matter of weeks . . . next fall," he anticipated

Coptic and Demotic ostraca in the Oriental Institute until her position was eliminated in 1951. See M. Lichtheim, *Telling It Briefly: A Memoir of My Life* (Fribourg: University Press, 1999), 31–32; Jacobsen to Parker, 17 January 1948, ISAC Museum Archives; Parker to Jacobsen, 30 January 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.

* Probably a reference to Helen Anderson, who was on the staff of the Oriental Institute publications office from at least 1932 into the late 1940s.

considerably more work to be done in that temple. One problem was keeping accurate records of what had been done. That season, using a copy of Nelson's *Key Plans*,* Nims and Hughes marked what was published, ready for publication, partially drawn, and untouched, with Hughes concluding, "There is a lot drawn in Khonsu but it's scattered and I can't figure out a volume or a plan without almost beginning from scratch."[132]

Hughes commented that "M.H. is a bit more promising," with an artist working on the Terrace, and that they were going to "concentrate our work and move back to mopping up as we go." Conscious of the slow rate of the work,† he wrote, "I have been pondering ideas for judiciously cutting some corners. I think of more well-preserved cliché strips in photograph,‡ more re-inforced photos, more drawings not facsimiles of less important odds," essentially relying more on photography than the very time-consuming facsimile drawings for all but the most important or unique scenes. Surprisingly, he also suggested that he try Amice Calverley's§ technique of "pencilling or re-inforcing" photographs. But he assured Wilson, "There is one thing, I hasten to add, that will not be short-cut in any degree: our established system of checking and double checking. I believe we are more finicky at the checking than ever."[133]

Years later, artist Donald Wilber commented on the time and effort that a facsimile drawing required:

> There were endless conversations in the drafting room. I remember how we relieved the tension brought on by the very exacting task of inking in the material without the slightest error. We tried to estimate exactly how much it cost the Oriental Institute for each hieroglyph that was inked in its final form. This was a tricky calculation because we had to guess at certain unknown amounts, such as the total salaries of the staff, the initial investment, and the cost of maintaining the house, the cars and the launches. I seem to recall the figure 24, but I don't know whether it was 24 cents or $2.40, or $24, probably not the last figure.[134]

The end of the 1949 season saw Hughes dealing with the departure of Ricardo Caminos, whose presence since 1947 had been such a motivation for work on the Bubastite Portal.¶ In 1950, Hughes wrote to Oriental Institute director Carl H. Kraeling (fig. 3.15), "I do not take such a dim view of his leaving as it might seem that I thought. . . . This prospect for a season is no new and shocking one to us; we contemplated it for this season when Parker was offered the job at Brown University last summer."** He further noted, "With only two of us, the epigraphy for two artists will still not suffer a let-down in precision," but with Nims doing both epigraphy and photography, they anticipated the impact on the latter. Mrs. Hughes, who was in charge of the house and hospitality, offered to take over the library from Caminos, a responsibility for which Hughes predicted, "Visitors may get short-shrift but that might be a good thing."[135]

Kraeling got off on the wrong foot with Hughes (fig. 3.16)—whom he had never met—by discussing the work of the Survey with John Wilson in Chicago and suggesting changes in operations without consulting Hughes. On March 15, 1950, he patronizingly promised "to discuss next year's

* See "Nelson's *Key Plans*" in chapter 5.

† No volume of Medinet Habu had been issued since 1940, and the next—*Medinet Habu* V—would appear in 1957.

‡ Apparently a reference to repetitious scenes.

§ Calverley was working at the Abydos Expedition, making copies of the reliefs in the temple of Sety I for the Egypt Exploration Society. See chapter 10, "The Epigraphic Survey and the Abydos Expedition, 1929–1959."

¶ Caminos published the texts on the gate, with historical commentary, as *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1958). See "The Bubastite Portal, 1931–1954" in chapter 5.

** The original reads, "when Caminos was offered the job at Brown University," apparently an error for "Parker." Hughes to Kraeling, 31 March 1950, ISAC Museum Archives.

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Figure 3.15. Carl Kraeling, director of the Oriental Institute 1950–60, and Doris Fessler, his administrative secretary. Both kept up lively correspondence with Luxor. Photo: S. Lewellyn, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

staff with John at the earliest opportunity so as to let you know how to proceed," completely ignoring the traditional autonomy that the field director had over his staff.[136]

Kraeling had commented in a lengthy letter of February 15 to Hughes that Medinet Habu should be the focus of the work ("which seems eminently wise"), the Survey should rely more on photography for documentation, the dimensions of future publications should be reduced, and folio boxes should be substituted for binding.[137] Kraeling concluded, "Meanwhile, you will naturally carry on as before and if the opportunity exists, I suggest that you extend the systematic photography at Medinet Habu as far as possible beyond the immediate requirements of the artists so that we may have a larger body of material on which to base any judgment we might jointly form as to the

Figure 3.16. Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling and George Hughes at Chicago House, 1950. Although they got off to a bad start, they developed a friendly and productive relationship. Photo: C. Nims.

relative proportions of the several techniques of recording."[138]

Kraeling also addressed staffing in his February 15 letter, specifically not offering a contract to artist Robert Anderson and hiring "the Russian" Alexander Floroff, who lived in Cairo. Although Hughes had apparently discussed the matter with Wilson, the tone of Kraeling's letter perhaps caused offense when he informed Hughes, "You are authorized to tell [Anderson of his dismissal]" and "There are various points I have discussed with the people here, to get their judgment, so that I might give you my reactions to John's suggestions and the authorization to take such steps as may be necessary."[139]

Hughes responded the next month with an angry letter:

> In the past, I believe, the director here has always made his own decisions on the assumption that confidence could be placed in his knowledge of the various circumstances and necessities involved and his interpretation of them. . . . I have no quarrel with any new policy of making decisions regarding staff and operation in Chicago. You have every right to do so and perhaps you see a real necessity to do so. I have no comment to make except that my successor as director at Luxor will find it rather difficult to operate under those conditions. I have

> found it, as I think my predecessors have, rather a difficult task even with almost complete freedom to deal with and keep on good terms with the staff, the government, the Egyptian workmen and others without being caught between them and someone else.[140]

He further commented that he "might be happier [accepting an offered position of associate professor] at Michigan anyway despite my previous disbelief, but I am certain I would be if my role is to be one circumscribed in responsibility for decisions but not in responsibility for action. If that is the situation henceforth or if there is any hesitation about my competence specifically, I am not interested in arguing either proposition." He concluded, "I write thus straightforwardly to give you the opportunity to choose your own man for this job and perhaps give me a deciding shove to something I probably ought to have sense enough to grasp independently."[141]

This letter was followed by a series of contrite messages from Kraeling, the first being a telegram of March 27 that stated "deeply regret complications caused by conflicting advices [*sic*] received here," hence sidestepping any personal responsibility for the offense to Hughes. But on April 1 he was more direct, writing, "There is not the slightest intention on my part to interfere with the authority of a Field Director over his staff during any given period of work." But the relationship was damaged, as indicated by Hughes in a message to Kraeling informing him that Hughes was terminating his assistant, Evelyn Perkins,* and adding, "But feeling the new uncertainty of my authority in relation to my staff I also cast it as notification of a recommendation to you on which you can act adversely and so inform her."[142]

Over the next year, however, Hughes and Kraeling seem to have repaired the early misunderstandings, and the letters from the rest of Kraeling's directorship reflect a cordial friendship and collegial relationship. In 1951, Kraeling started negotiations with Rockefeller for an additional $10,000 per year over five years that would allow the Survey to add another epigrapher and artist.[143] As Hughes wrote, "If we had two more draftsmen we could make things hum, and if we could get one additional epigrapher with them we'd have a piece of heaven."[144] That November, Kraeling also approached the Bollingen Foundation for possible funding of Nelson's "Analytical Catalog" (fig. 3.17), a resource that Hughes declared was "something we could use every day on this job. I hope something can be done about it for his sake and ours too."[145] Never published, it exists today as a 5″ × 8″ loose-leaf binder filled with hundreds of tidy drawings of iconographic details of reliefs, all carefully referenced to their sources.

The work in Luxor was unsettled by the anti-British (and anti-American) sentiments in 1951 that culminated in the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952. In November 1951, Hughes received a message from the "Liberal Battalion of Luxor" ordering him to expel all the Survey's British employees (Healey and Champion), and "as a first step the English [name]plate on the outside door should be removed just now. We are not responsible for all the damages that will happen to the institute after that." Hughes reported the threat to the local authorities, who posted round-the-clock guards on the house in addition to the three regular Chicago House security men. Despite this added security, the brass nameplate disappeared one night. Hughes again contacted the local police: "This morning I reported the removal and at the very time that the C.I.D. man was here investigating we were

* Perkins, who deserves her own biography, was "the ultimate assistant" to George Reisner and kept his excavations operating after he lost most of his sight. She joined Reisner's team in 1931 and managed his Harvard Camp through World War II. Perkins worked for the Epigraphic Survey from 1947 to 1950. She died in Cairo in 1951. See Der Manuelian, *Walking among Pharaohs*, 655–56, 806–7.

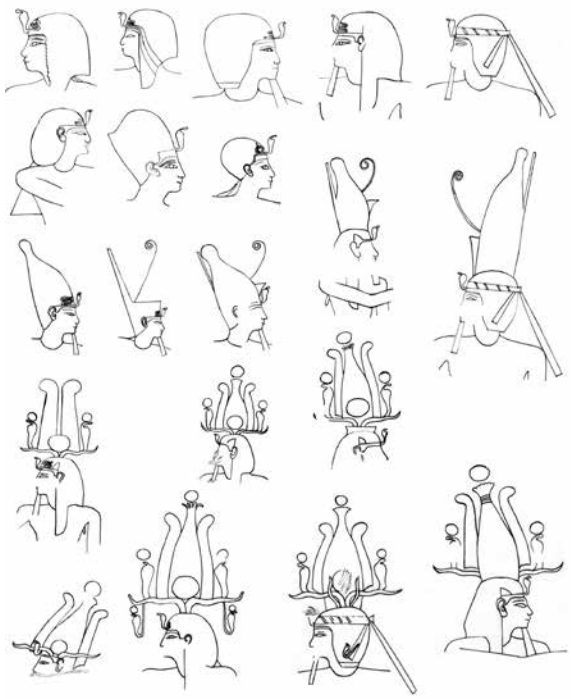

Figure 3.17. Page from Nelson's unpublished "Analytical Catalog" showing different crowns.

favored with a sound truck passing and repassing the house blaring for English and Americans to get out. . . . As you can imagine, our English staff are a bit edgy." Tim Healey and his family moved from "Healey House," a small house in the garden behind the residence wing, into the main house, which was thought to be more secure; he considered evacuating his family but abandoned the plan because it would mean departing through Cairo, where there were antiforeign riots. Hughes assured Kraeling, "Personally, I do not think there is anything to get panicky about at the moment and shall not leave if there is any possibility at all of going on with our work. . . . The people of Luxor and the officials are our friends."[146] Artist Floroff was in Cairo (where he lived off-season) in early January 1952, and he witnessed riots that led to the core of downtown Cairo being burned on January 26, known as "Black Saturday." According to Hughes, "Mr. Floroff reports that it was even worse than we have heard. Also we learn just this morning of the new government. Everything is as always here, but we are interested, let us say, about what may develop elsewhere."[147]

By early March 1952, it was uncertain whether the new Egyptian government would issue visas to British or even American citizens. In the discussion of staff contracts for the 1952 season, Hughes summed up the impact of the first eventuality: "Believe me if Healey and Champion don't or can't come back the place is going to be shot as far as production is concerned no matter whom we get to replace them—this is especially true of Champion."[148] Chicago finally issued contracts with stipulations that they were valid *if* the expedition could resume in Luxor for the 1952 season and *if* the Americans received permission to enter Egypt, because Chicago did not "not want to be stuck with paying someone who couldn't get to Luxor."[149] Its concern was well placed, because only the Survey, the British at Saqqara, and the Griffith Institute of Oxford were able to continue their work. The French had been banned in January 1952 in a "tit for tat" over the French not allowing the Egyptians to establish an institute of Islamic studies in Tunis.[150] Generally, other than Chicago House and some small-scale British work, there was no archaeological activity in the Nile Valley, and even the Egyptian Antiquities Service "did not undertake much beyond the necessary work of caring for the monuments owing to changes in organization."

However, a general feeling of optimism over the appointment of General Mohammed Naguib as president of Egypt was shared by Hughes and others at Chicago House, with Hughes writing of a "new hope, a new outlook on the part of the people . . . that could not have been expected."[151] Hughes wrote of Naguib's first visit to Luxor in late March 1953, when he gave an address from the veranda of the Winter Palace Hotel, for which, Hughes recalled, the entire town turned out.[152] He was impressed with several demonstrations of Naguib's humility, noting, "We are as enthusiastic about him as are his Egyptian countrymen," and he

proudly related that he had been able to shake the president's hand.[153]

Work in the Early 1950s

The staff for the 1950–55 seasons was stable and small, consisting of Hughes, Nims (who did double duty as photographer and epigrapher), and artists Champion and Floroff. Maurine Hughes managed the house and the library, and Myrtle Nims bound books (see fig. 12.50 in chapter 12).

The early 1950s were devoted to the work at Medinet Habu.* Hughes wrote, "For the first year since I have been on the expedition we have not had to spend a minute anywhere except at Medinet Habu."[154] Nims did photography of the Second Court, and he also had an "extracurricular project": taking color slides of scenes in the Theban tombs for the Oriental Institute slide collection. The first Hypostyle Hall of Medinet Habu (fig. 3.18) and the scenes of the sons of Ramesses III on the terrace of the Second Court were the focus of the epigraphic work.

Other projects included updating the dictionary cards, doing final work on *Medinet Habu* V, and writing the text volume for *Medinet Habu* III (on the Calendar, "Slaughterhouse," and minor records), a volume that never appeared. Hughes also intended to add to Nelson's "Analytical Catalog," which documented divinities.[155]

In 1954, Kraeling began his own excavations at Ptolemais in Libya, and he engaged Nims as his photographer, inviting Hughes to join him in 1956. Nims also acted as photographer for the UNESCO project in 1955, spending six weeks photographing the temple of Abu Simbel, for which UNESCO reimbursed Chicago for his time and travel (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963"). Of course, all these projects created delays for the work in Thebes.

In 1954, Carl Kraeling approached the Rockefeller Foundation with a proposal to make a push to finish the work at Medinet Habu by 1961. He commented that his bold approach was inspired by Amice Calverley (see chapter 10, "The Epigraphic Survey and the Abydos Expedition, 1929–1959"), who several times had secured additional funding for her work at Abydos by, in Kraeling's words, "weeping on our friend's shoulder. . . . So I finally decided that if weeping on people's shoulders worked such wonders, maybe I ought to use some of the same medicine."[156] The budget called for funding two additional artists and one Egyptologist for three years. Although the proposal was declined, it stimulated a visit by Rockefeller Foundation representatives to Chicago, a Mr. Creel in 1954 and John Marshall in 1955, the latter of whom proved to be more helpful. Marshall's visit to Luxor in February got off to a bad start when he announced to Hughes that he was visiting to see the operation, not to authorize funds; however, he commented that he thought the Foundation's turn away from archaeology to humanities should be reconsidered. Hughes instructed the staff to "be damned busy and poor looking when he shows up," musing, "Why do funders turn their backs on a gilt-edged investment of proven performance like this?" when the Survey was "just about the most significant doggoned thing he is going to find in his 'humanities' area."[157] Marshall's visit actually did go well, and Labib Habachi (see fig. 7.2 in chapter 7) helped dazzle him by arranging a visit to the tomb of Nefertari.

Later that year, Kraeling presented another proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation, this time for ten years of funding, again with the goal of adding staff to complete work at Medinet Habu by 1961. This plan also called for "changing the pattern of our work in Egypt," after the completion of Medinet Habu, by turning Chicago House into a research center for Egyptology. Hughes objected to

* The 1951 season saw Champion finish the last drawings for the Bubastite Portal and Floroff working on the Opet reliefs at Khonsu, but the work was primarily at Medinet Habu. Hughes commented that he still needed to write the text for the Bubastite Portal volume.

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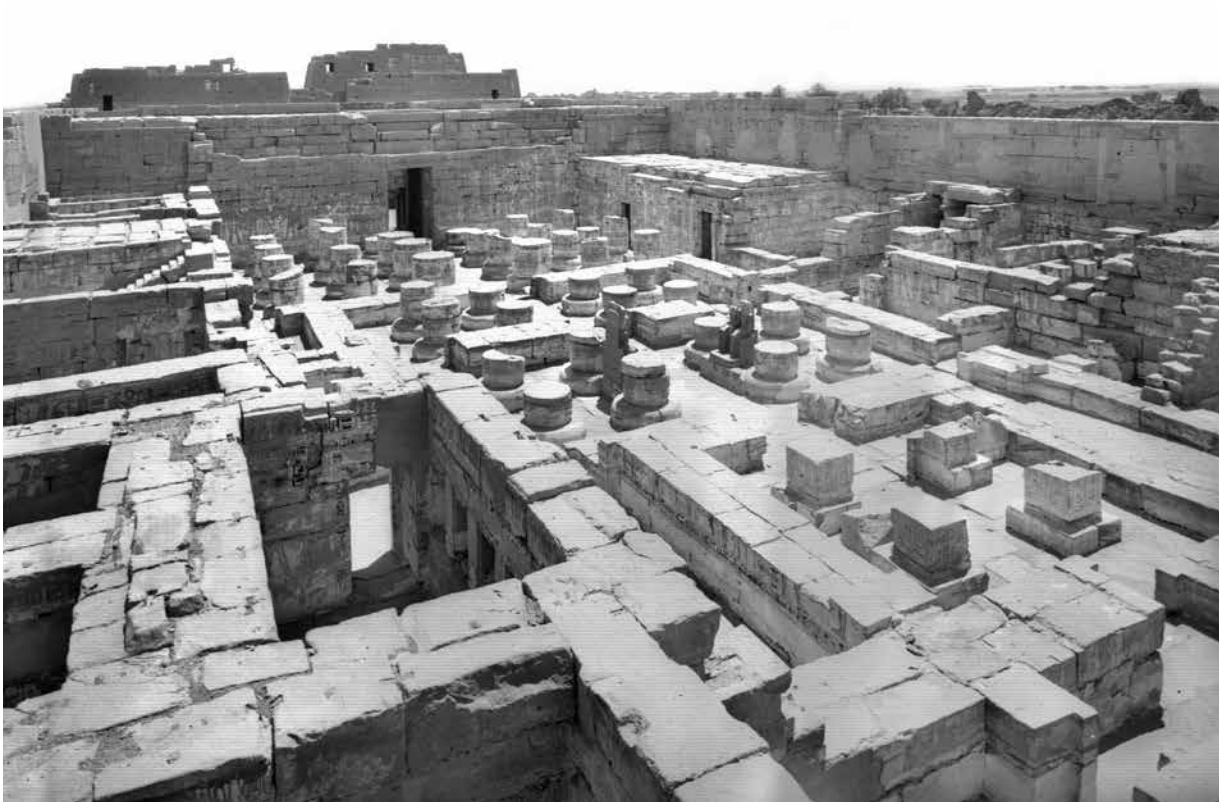

Figure 3.18. View of the Hypostyle Hall at Medinet Habu, the focus of work in the 1950s. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

this model on the basis that "there has to be a good deal of continuity out here or nothing much will get done."[158] In December 1955, the plan was approved by the voting members of the Oriental Institute—to the great relief of Kraeling, who had expected "a hot time" on the proposal.[159]

In December 1955, Kraeling reported that the Institute had received $400,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation and could move forward on the new plan for the Survey. Hughes vowed, "I promise you we shall finish Medinet Habu by 1961 or bust a hame-strap in the attempt."[160]

In later years, Hughes recalled Kraeling's plans for the Survey and Chicago House—which never were implemented—as trying to turn the Survey into "a kind of American-School-in-Jerusalem. . . . He talked of professors and students coming out and pursuing their own projects with only a permanent major domo in charge." He favored Nelson's idea of "thinking of Egyptology in Chicago and Luxor in one package. However, the two parts of the package need not be too tightly bound together." Chicago would focus on individual research, and the Survey on large collaborative projects. Hughes wrote to Oriental Institute director Robert McCormick Adams that "Kraeling must have gotten irked hearing some of us repeatedly say, 'The only thing to do with Chicago House is what is being done with it now, the job which it was set up to do, as no other outfit has ever been.' It is probably the most unspectacular, longest-term and one of the most important jobs being done in Egyptology, a job which nobody else is equipped to do or wants to do, but which the French Institute has been politically forced into doing in an inadequate manner, and which the internationally sponsored Centre de Documentation in Cairo is admirably planned to do and does miserably."[161]

The 1961 deadline for finishing the temple was derailed by the Suez Crisis and its aftermath. In November 1956, the American consul advised all Americans to leave Egypt. Hughes reported, "We had many moments of uncertainty and much discussion with the people of the American Mission here about what to do. We heard of the elaborate evacuation plans for Americans, but we all decided that there was no need to leave immediately where no children were concerned. After all we had just arrived and were peacefully at work so we didn't want to leave hastily for no good reason and look foolish."[162] Then very soon it was no longer possible to leave, and that decisively settled the problem. Ed Wente, then a graduate student on a Fulbright fellowship in Cairo who had witnessed the bombing of the city, asked whether he could shelter in the relative safety of Chicago House. As Hughes wrote, "Of course, on the night he arrived, Nov. 1, there was staged for us the first of a series of brilliant and noisy displays at our local airport. We have often idly talked about wanting to be safely in Luxor when 'another war' broke out, but little did we imagine that we should one day stand on the roof of Chicago House or peer from the Osiris suite of Ramses IIIrd's mortuary temple to watch bombs drop and anti-aircraft shells burst over Luxor."[163] Kraeling, who normally did not include political views in his letters to Hughes, commented, "The recent events have left us speechless and with the rest of the country we are shocked by the British-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt and amazed at the stupidity of those who contrived this enterprise."[164]

A more lasting impact was the inability of the British staff—Healey and artists Champion and Reginald (Reg) Coleman—and the South African, artist Richard Boberg, to obtain visas, leaving a skeleton crew of the Hugheses, Nimses, and Floroff in 1956. Hughes managed to open the house, a complicated and time-consuming task that was normally Healey's responsibility, and he was faced with myriad small but challenging repairs, which, when successful, were greeted with "Mabrouk"* from the bemused Egyptian staff. Luckily, the bank accounts of the Survey were registered as a resident institution, so unlike all other foreigners' funds, they were not frozen.[165]

No one could foresee whether or when the British might again receive visas for Egypt and whether the ban would soon include Americans. The Hugheses, Nimses, and Wente had difficulty even obtaining routine extensions for their visas in 1956, and there was concern whether they, too, would be able to enter Egypt for the 1957 season, or for years to come. Kraeling's first instruction was to use the time as best they could, to turn it into a sort of study season: "We hope you will feel free to undertake whatever work you can without the help of the artists."[166] By December, the situation looked so unsettled and discouraging that Kraeling again suggested that they put the Survey into "mothballs."[167] He also discussed "whether it might be necessary to . . . regretfully drop the British members of our staff."[168] If this was to be the case, Kraeling suggested "it may be necessary to have some of the drawings done elsewhere than in the field and whether checking of pencilled renderings may not need to be done at intervals in the field without the presence of the artists. If this were to be so, it might be desirable to bring along as much of the material for the next volume or volumes that could be drawn in pencil at home by Doug [Champion] so that it should go back at a later date and be checked against the wall for inaccuracies."[169]

Yet even with the uncertainty of working in Egypt, Hughes and Kraeling continued to discuss the possibility of working with UNESCO on the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia and also in the tomb of Kheruef, although in early February 1955, Kraeling wrote to Hughes that he felt "strongly that you and Charles should not be diverted from the Medinet Habu operation, especially the preparation of the next volume."[170]

* Arabic for "congratulations."

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The interruption of the Suez Crisis and the uncertainty of the future meant that the goal of finishing Medinet Habu by the revised date of April 1962 and modifying the entire structure of work in Egypt was abandoned, or as John Wilson put it, rendered "a tragic joke."[171]

By the 1957 season, the visa issues had been temporarily resolved, and with additional funding, the Survey took to the field with a larger staff of four artists (Champion, Coleman, Floroff, and Boberg) working with Hughes and Nims (fig. 3.19). All work was directed at completing Medinet Habu. Hughes spent the 1958 season in Chicago attending to medical issues but also had the time to write for the publications. John Wilson, by then a distinguished Egyptologist, former director of the Oriental Institute, former member of the Survey from 1926 to 1931, and diplomat, substituted for Hughes in Luxor.

Figure 3.19. Staff and visitors at Chicago House, December 1957. Top: Richard Boberg, Douglas Champion, Reginald Coleman, Charles Nims. Middle: Tim Healey, Maurine Hughes, Labib Habachi. Bottom: Myrtle Nims, George Hughes, Zaki Iskander. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

The political events of the mid-twentieth century—the partition of Palestine in 1947, the Egyptian revolution in 1952, and the Suez Crisis in 1956—all fueled Egyptian nationalism. A major impact on the Survey was the continuing uncertainty about the issuance of visas. Calls were also growing for foreign missions to have meaningful collaboration with their Egyptian colleagues, even as bureaucratic loads created by the regulations that communications with the Ministry be in Arabic greatly increased. Another consequence was the empowerment of the Egyptian employees in their relations with the Survey, following the new Constitution of 1956 and the Egyptianization Laws of 1957 that introduced new social welfare bills, a minimum wage, and a form of social security.[172] In 1958, Wilson, acting field director, commented on having to keep two lawyers, Fuad Guergis in Luxor and Ibrahim Harari in Cairo, on "steady retainer" for personnel issues, to compute the correct amount of income tax due for the Egyptian staff, and to steer him "through the maze of government offices and requirements. Some day we're going to have to have a *katib* [scribe] to handle the string of documents in Arabic and the telephone calls in Arabic and so on."[173] That March, he complained, "I got the bank account seized by the government and a threat of criminal action against me."[174] The administrative work was taking a toll on Hughes.

To make the case that the Survey had meaningful collaboration with Egyptian colleagues, Hughes could point to the clearance of the tomb of Kheruef, which was undertaken with the Minister of Antiquities (see chapter 7, "The Tomb of Kheruef, 1954–1980"). However, collaboration did not carry over to the epigraphic aspect of the work, which Kraeling and Hughes tried to keep as a Chicago-only operation. When the

Egyptian Antiquities Service offered the services of Egyptian draftsmen in December 1958, Hughes conveyed the Survey's policy: "The principle that in our work we should cooperate with the scholars and specialists of the countries in which we work is one under which we are operating in Iraq, Libya and Egypt. As you know, in the clearance of the Kheruef Tomb we have worked and hope to continue to work in close partnership with the representatives of your Department. This was in accord with our own request and whenever it seems feasible to us we shall continue to make such requests, as we do also in other Arab countries." He further justified his refusal to make the work at Medinet Habu a joint project as follows: "But we have discussed this matter carefully between us and we feel that since the epigraphic work has been begun and has been so long continued under the system employed by our own staff and since it is now so close to completion, we would the more effectively discharge the obligations laid upon us by our concessions if we were to continue to use the men already familiar with the intricate system than if we were to use the men whose service you have so kindly offered."[175]

Writing more candidly to Wilson, Hughes continued, "Carl [Kraeling] is dubious of the wisdom of our taking on local men on the M.H. recording job, whether they are of the Department or not. As he stated: he wants to keep M.H. and Kheruef separate: The first distinctly our own, the second a cooperative enterprise. I could not agree more completely on this distinction."[176] Despite the lack of interest in hiring Egyptians for the scientific staff, when Wilson was acting field director in February 1959, a young Egyptian architect/artist, Jean-Pierre Rathle, trained with the Survey for several weeks to see whether he could join the staff the next season. Wilson was optimistic about him, reporting that "his line looks good" and, on a more personal note, "He is a nice shy boy and a pleasure to have in the house. We haven't collated his trial piece yet, but there is no doubt about his trying hard and well."[177]

A major problem facing the Survey was that it had operated without a signed concession since 1947 when it resumed work after the war. This was a major concern, considering the uncertainty of relations between the foreign missions and the Department of Antiquities. In late September 1958, Wilson, accompanied by Habachi, met with the director-general of the Department, Abd el-Fatah Hilmy. Hilmy expressed "surprise" that the document was lacking. The meeting gave Wilson the opportunity to make sure that the document, when issued, would include the Khonsu Temple. But the meeting became more complicated when the minister requested copies of Chicago House photographs and their dictionary cards as a condition of receiving the permission.* As Wilson, then acting field director, wrote to Hughes, "a favorable response must be shown to the Minister of Education." Wilson advised, "What is necessary is that this year produce results which can be exhibited to the Minister," suggesting that a "sheaf" of photographs from the publications may suffice, and optimistically, "If we simply forget the dictionary cards, they may remain forgotten."[178]

In late 1958, Kraeling expressed his own concern about sharing the photo archive, cautioning Wilson, "We should proceed as slowly as possible in the matter at issue. I am strongly of the opinion that gestures are meaningless under present circumstances, that 'give-aways' merely whet the appetite." He suggested that a policy on sharing the archive be issued from Chicago to provide a "shield" for the field director, who then could respond: "Policy is made at the home base, so we must first take up the matter there." Kraeling suggested, "The authorities understand that kind of thing and besides it gives you and them somebody to cuss when necessary."[179] But Hughes took a different tack, and in January

* Although not stated, it can be presumed that the photos were for the Centre d'Étude et de Documentation sur l'ancienne Égypte (CEDAE), which had been founded in 1955 by Mustafa Amer with the mission of being a repository of photos and data about Egyptian monuments that would be shared among academic institutions.

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1959, he devised an overall strategy of cooperation with the copying of the photographic archive in exchange for receiving the written concession. He further agreed that the copies of photos would be made by Department staff "at no working cost to us."[180] That year, letters note that a photographer from the Ministry collected batches of negatives from Chicago House and took them to Karnak for duplication.

The year 1961 (and then 1962), once projected for the completion of Medinet Habu, saw the Survey diverted from that mission to epigraphic work in the tomb of Kheruef and at the temple of Ramesses II at Beit el-Wali in Nubia. The prospect of the Survey staff being diverted to another project in Nubia was presented to the voting members of the Oriental Institute, who supported the work even though it meant "sacrificing" a season's work at Medinet Habu. Hughes served as director of the project at Beit el-Wali (fig. 3.20); Nims was photographer; and Coleman, John Foster, and Greener were artists.[181]

The Nubia project indeed distracted the Luxor team from its work at Medinet Habu. Hughes wrote to Ethel Schenk* in Chicago complaining about having to divide his efforts (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963").[182]

Figure 3.20. George Hughes with his wife, Maurine, bound for Egypt, in a picture taken by the University of Chicago to publicize the Nubian Salvage project, ca. 1960. Photo: Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Publications under Hughes

Medinet Habu—Volume V came with an extremely long subtitle: *The Temple Proper, Part I: The Portico, the Treasury, and Chapels Adjoining the First Hypostyle Hall, with Marginal Material from the Forecourts.* It appeared in 1957 as OIP 83. Like *Medinet Habu* III, *Medinet Habu* V had the smaller format (48.5 × 38.0 centimeters). The black-and-white plates were printed by Photopress Inc. in Broadview, Illinois. The reverse of the title page notes that color plate 322 was printed, as done in previous volumes, by Ganymed, Berlin, although that plate (like the only other one in color, pl. 250) is marked "Photopress, Inc., Broadview, Illinois."

The material in *Medinet Habu* V was presented mainly as photos rather than line drawings, a decision made, as Hughes wrote in the preface (p. ix), owing to several factors: the relief's generally good state of preservation, whether the relief was accessible to photography, and the desire to record the temple as rapidly as possible with the Survey's smaller staff. Some corners were cut to get the volume in print, as Hughes acknowledged, noting that plate 335—a drawing of an offering scene on a long wall in a narrow chamber—is distorted, which he dismisses as "understandable," adding that "it could have been eliminated," but since the fault was discovered only after "a great amount of time and

* Ethel Schenk worked at the Oriental Institute from 1941 to 1974, initially as secretary to the financial office (1941), then as secretary to the director (1942–55), and finally as administrative secretary (1956–74). She exchanged many often-humorous letters with Hughes, Nims, and Wente, and her advice was often sought.

painstaking work had been spent on the drawing," redoing it at that point was "hardly justifiable." Further, he noted that plates 350, 352B, and 359 were not produced from photographs and hence were not true facsimiles because the scenes were in an "inaccessible location." Those plates were made from "corrected hand copies," a technique that the Survey had avoided in the past. New conventions for representing paint, misaligned blocks, and ancient corrections were introduced in this volume.

The credits in *Medinet Habu* V differ from those in *Medinet Habu* IV. Two photographers worked on the material: Leichter, who had died in 1940, and Nims, who had taken over as photographer after the war. Thus, the volume includes a credit for each photo, whether Leichter or Nims, although those credits do not appear in the List of Plates. The drawings are similarly credited to specific artists, again not in the List of Plates.

The preparation of *Medinet Habu* V did not go smoothly in Chicago. Keith Seele, then in the publications office of the Oriental Institute, clashed with Hughes over the organization of the volume, sending him long letters that motivated Hughes to write a very (uncharacteristically) strongly worded letter to director Kraeling:

> He [Seele] has written me two long letters proposing some very thoroughgoing changes in the arrangement of the book.* This after a condescending peroration to the half-wit boy who doesn't know what the score is. He has long propounded theories about Egyptian temple decoration and about Nelson's failure to understand them. I have done some heavy thinking on the matter and a lot of prospecting in Medinet Habu on that special subject. Take it from me, he doesn't know a damn thing about it if those arm-chair theories are any indication. Nelson knew what he was doing. If Seele looked at the actual contents of the scenes in our plates he would see why we ordered them as we did and would knock his pet theories into a cocked hat. . . . He should know better sitting in Lake Dalecarlia† about the door of the Medinet Habu treasury than I do climbing all over it! Believe me, I have examined it again with a microscope and Hoelscher was wrong, I am right and my only mistake was I wasn't apodictic enough about it.[183]

Kraeling responded with his support: "None of us know what Keith Seele wrote to you about Medinet Habu V. We hope that you will insist on having you [*sic*] publication precisely as you want it and accept such of his suggestions as may be constructive."[184] This strained relationship between Hughes and Seele would continue during the Nubian campaign, when Hughes was called on to substitute for his Chicago colleague (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963").

Medinet Habu—Volume VI: The Temple Proper, Part II: The Re Chapel, the Royal Mortuary Complex, and Adjacent Rooms with Miscellaneous Material from the Pylons, the Forecourts, and the First Hypostyle Hall (OIP 84) appeared in 1963 at the end of Hughes's field directorship. In the preface, he comments that the Survey's progress was slowed by the political events of 1956, which made it impossible for the full number of artists to receive visas. Once the political situation stabilized, the work began again in earnest, and eight artists are credited (Boberg, Champion, Coleman, Floroff, Greener, Hasselriis, Longley, and Shepherd).

One year later, *Medinet Habu—Volume VII: The Temple Proper, Part III: The Third Hypostyle Hall and All Rooms Accessible from It with Friezes*

* Unfortunately, these letters have not been found, so Hughes must have treated them as highly confidential. The letters were received after another incident that Kraeling recorded as Seele "[blowing] his top at me for not having put his name at the head of the section on publications in the Oriental Institute booklet. Now I hear he is on your trail about some 'terrible' mistake in the new Medinet Habu volume. I hope it does not worry you any more than it does me. He told me he got into an argument with a guy who was trying to shoot ducks from his front lawn. What a life he must have" (Kraeling to Hughes, 9 November 1955, ISAC Museum Archives).

† Seele's residence in Indiana.

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of Scenes from the Roof Terraces and Exterior Walls of the Temple (OIP 93) was published. This volume completed the documentation of the Great Temple and included key plans for the plates in all seven volumes. Again, George Hughes wrote the brief preface. The lineup of artists changed slightly. Drawings done by Bollacher more than three decades before were included, and John F. Foster joined the team of artists, but Longley, Shepherd, and Hasselriis* were no longer represented.

The other publication that appeared in the immediate postwar years, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume III: The Bubastite Portal* (OIP 74, 1954), was fraught with production problems (see "The Bubastite Portal, 1931–1954" in chapter 5).

Charles Nims and Edward Wente, 1963-1972

Charles Nims, 1963-1971

In 1963, George Hughes was recalled to Chicago to join the faculty. The choice of Charles Nims (fig. 3.21) as his successor as field director was not as automatic as it had been for Hughes following Parker. Hughes admitted that when Edward Wente joined the Survey in 1959, it was as though "I had picked my successor if there was ever going to be one," and that "I have long thought of Ed being my successor," but he made those comments on the assumption that Nims would be Chicago's pick for the faculty slot.[185] However, Nims was passed over because of perceived academic shortcomings and the complaints of a student whom he had taught in winter 1960—charges that Hughes vehemently refuted, ascribing them to "pure personal vindictive resentment" on the part of Keith Seele and stating that the tenure meeting sounded "more like a witch hunt than a serious deliberation in a great institution."[186] He added an uncharacteristically snide

Figure 3.21. Charles Nims, Epigraphic Survey field director 1963–71, with his wife, Myrtle, in the field director's suite at Chicago House, ca. 1966. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

comment wondering how many negative comments had been received from students at Berkeley and Loyola, a reference to Keith Seele and Egyptology faculty member Klaus Baer.

Oriental Institute director Robert McCormick Adams responded that there had been allegations that Nims was "chronically undiplomatic in his dealings with locals and defective in judgment at critical moments," but he asked Hughes for his opinion about them, because "if these are entirely untrue, it is difficult for me to see any justice in keeping him out of the directorship . . . the important consideration for naming your successor would seem to be of a personal and not an academic character."[187] In a six-page letter to Kraeling, Hughes advocated for his longtime colleague and friend, recounting that Nims, who had been on the Survey for two decades, had been passed over for the directorship first in favor of Richard Parker, who had had two seasons in Luxor, and then in favor of Hughes, a younger man with a single season's experience. Hughes felt that this was unfair and the decisions were based on politics at the Institute and in the university's Department of Oriental Languages and Civilizations. He added that appointing Wente

* Mark Hasselriis worked for the Survey for the first two months of the 1946 season and was replaced by Alexander Floroff. Hasselriis is credited with one drawing (pl. 434) in *Medinet Habu* VI. Richard Boberg also stayed for a single season (1957).

instead of Nims would put Wente in an awkward position, imploring, "You can't do this to Charley and Ed."[188] He later wrote to Wilson, "I think he [Nims] would buckle down, he and Myrtle would be faithful custodians, and all would go on perfectly well."[189]

The staff in Luxor made their preference known. There was "a united-front rebellion by the draftsmen" against Wente because they felt that that his style of collation was "too niggling, pointless, and time-wasting."[190] At the beginning of the 1963 season, Hughes and Nims ran the Survey together; in December, Hughes announced the transition to the staff, who were "glad that the replacements were to be the Nimses." He also called the Egyptian staff together to inform them "that the next day they have a new *mudir**—[and] not to ask me anything from then on."[191] In January 1964, Nims became the fifth field director. He had worked with the Survey almost continuously for over twenty years, so the transition had few bumps. Hughes returned to Chicago and joined the faculty, and in 1968 he became the sixth director of the Oriental Institute.

When Nims took over, he declared that "the present plans are to finish the High Gate at Medinet Habu [fig. 3.22] and the Tomb of Kheruef as soon as possible, then to concentrate on the Temple of Khonsu at Karnak, on which some considerable work has been done in the past." He predicted, overly optimistically, that the High Gate and Khonsu would be done by the end of the next season.[192]

In 1964, the Survey had been working on the High Gate at Medinet Habu for three years. By the end of his first season as field director, Nims reported that most of the work on it was complete and that the "Tomb Chapel of Kheruef is behind us. Still, there are many odd bits which will take some time." Again optimistically, he forecast, "We believe that by the end of another season both projects will be practically finished."[193] Indeed, this prediction was overly hopeful, because the following year he noted that more work on the gate "in hard to reach places" needed to be done, and they had found that some of the existing photos had to be reshot.[194] In December 1966, he wrote, "We believe that the final drawings of the High Gate at Medinet Habu will be made this season," and "Between now and Christmas we hope to resume the copying of the scenes at the temple of Khonsu in Karnak, concentrating on these which were carved during the lifetime of the High Priest of Amon, Herihor."[195]

Nims enlarged the staff in an effort to complete the documentation of the Great Temple. He wanted two Egyptologists/epigraphers (in addition to himself), but Ed Wente, who had become a valuable member of the team, was to return to Chicago to teach during the 1963 season. Teaching was an important step for Wente toward professorial status, which would not only enable him to possibly serve as the field director but also ensure his faculty position to succeed John Wilson as professor in Chicago.† In 1963–64, Nims had just Leonard Lesko, the only seasons Lesko worked for the Survey. In 1965, Wente returned to Luxor along with student epigrapher Carl DeVries. In 1966 there were four epigraphers (adding David Larkin and John Callender, the latter for the second half of the season).

Nims also increased the number of artists. For some seasons he had four artists (Michael Barnwell, Coleman, Greener, and Floroff‡), and five in 1964 and 1968, at times with John Romer, Eric Morby, and Grace Huxtable, making the Nims years the most heavily staffed to that point. No new staff photographer was hired, because of the backlog of reliefs that had already been photographed, and Nims shot any new images that were required.

Political events thwarted Nims's push to speed up the work. The anti-American sentiment resulting from perceived US support for Israel during and following the Six-Day War in 1967 created delays in

* Arabic for (male) "director" or "boss."

† Wilson retired in 1968.

‡ Alexander Floroff had to retire at the end of the 1963 season because of the University of Chicago's mandatory retirement-age policy.

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Figure 3.22. The Eastern High Gate at Medinet Habu, 1927. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

obtaining visas, and whether the 1967 season would even operate was uncertain. The staff did return to Luxor, although a month later than scheduled. Wente and DeVries were able to join Nims, but the season operated without a fourth artist (Greener had retired) to join Coleman, Huxtable, and Romer, an absence that slowed the season's progress. Nims again hoped to finish the High Gate that season as work also continued at Khonsu and Kheruef. Working at three sites stretched the staff, and Nims reported to then Oriental Institute director Adams, "By working at three sites, we have some problems of workmen, but I guess we can stretch them out. However the 'union' rules about what a man should do on his particular job is worse, in some ways, than in the U.S. unions, and sometimes I can't always get the men to do the things they should unless these have been specified in their labor record."[196] The administrative tasks wore on Nims. As he wrote to Ethel Schenk, the Oriental Institute's administrative secretary, "George used to say that there must be an easier way to make a living."[197]

In early January 1968, Nims was finally able to report that the High Gate was finished (other than a few photos that he had to find the time to take), and only two months later, the manuscript for the High Gate was at the press. After forty-four years, the Epigraphic Survey had completed its work on the major monuments of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu,* actually only a few years later than the

* The Survey began conserving and documenting the decorated Southern Well of Ramesses III in 2006. See "Peter Dorman, W. Raymond Johnson, and J. Brett McClain:

ambitious estimate of 1962. It started to remove its equipment and demolish the sheds it had constructed at the site. Nims advised Adams, "I will notify the Department of Antiquities that we have finished our interests there, but tell them that at a future time we hope to return to the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple and the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty Chapels. I would not like to give up our claim completely, but we must concentrate on the Temple of Khonsu for the next several years, certainly beyond my tenure as Field Director."[198] Indeed, other than some final work at Kheruef in 1969, the Survey worked exclusively at the Khonsu Temple through the 1972 season.

With the immediate projects nearing completion, the future of the Survey looked uncertain. In late January 1968, Nims wrote to Adams about staffing but qualified his comments with "that is, if we do continue operating, as I think we will."[199]

There was little staff turnover during Nims's tenure, but filling the empty positions, much less the ones that he added, was not always easy. Hiring epigraphers was always a balancing act, because most of the candidates were advanced graduate students who needed to complete their dissertations at the same time they were working full-time in Luxor for at least six months of the year. Further, there was always the consideration of an individual's potential to stay with the Survey, finish their PhD, and become field director—which also colored the selection of junior faculty in Chicago. During the faculty search in 1964, candidates included Henry Fischer, Klaus Baer, Serge Sauneron, and even Ricardo Caminos—the latter a dark horse considering the disagreements over the Bubastite Portal text (see "Publication of the Bubastite Portal" in chapter 5)—each being evaluated with his potential for work in Luxor in mind.[200]

Although Wente returned from a year of teaching in Chicago and rejoined the survey as epigrapher for the 1965–67 seasons, it was clear that he intended to return to the faculty. For epigraphers, preference was given to advanced graduate students enrolled in the Chicago program (Edward Brovarski and John Callender, the latter of whom served for part of the 1966 season), although Nims considered other young American Egyptologists, including Lanny Bell and Otto Schaden, and also looked farther afield to European scholars Jacob Janssen and Jan Assmann.

David Larkin, a University of Chicago graduate student, came out in 1966 and stayed through the 1971 season. Another Chicago graduate student, Carl DeVries, who had joined the team in 1965 under Hughes, stayed with Nims through most of his tenure, leaving for Chicago after the 1970 season to work with Seele (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963"). Leonard Lesko, whom Chicago had high hopes of making a long-standing member of the Survey, worked for two seasons (1963 and 1964), substituting for Wente in 1963 during his absence in Chicago. Lesko accepted a position at Berkeley and hence left the Survey.

Work was also helped by consistency among the artists. Reginald Coleman worked through the Nims years and on, through the 1977 season. Grace Huxtable, the first female artist, was in Luxor for seven seasons (1966–72), Martyn Lack for eight seasons (1968–75), and Richard (Rick) Turner worked for Nims from 1968 through 1972, later returning for the 1976–79 seasons. John Romer was with the Survey in the 1966–68 seasons and later returned under Kent Weeks in 1973.

The year 1965 saw the publication of Nims's *Thebes of the Pharaohs*, then one of the few accessible accounts of the monuments of Luxor and their cultic importance.

Public Law 480 Funding and Nims

A crucial administrative development for the Nims years was the award of PL 480 funds to the Oriental

Conservation and Documentation, 1989–2024" later in this chapter.

Institute in early 1963.* These moneys were held by the US government as credit for payments from the Egyptian government for US grain donated to Egypt. Disbursed in Egyptian pounds (£E), the funds were made available to American institutions working in Egypt (and other countries), and they proved to be essential to the continued operation of Chicago House. The grant funds could be used to pay the salaries of the Egyptian staff and for supplies, house maintenance, and some travel expenses that did not have to be paid in dollars. Nims even looked into having the Beit el-Wali and Kheruef publications printed in Italy or Germany, where PL 480 funds could be spent.[201] Shifting many expenses to the grant freed up dollars to hire extra non-Egyptian staff.

Although the PL 480 money provided an essential financial cushion for the Survey's operations, the grant also entailed a huge amount of extra administrative work for Nims, who now had to manage which expenses could be paid with Egyptian pounds from the grant and which in dollars from Chicago, and who also had to write detailed annual financial reports. Complicated banking regulations in Egypt also had to be navigated, along with accounting in two currencies. The funds were funneled from the State Department to the Smithsonian Institution and then administered by the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) in Cairo, resulting in closer ties—not always totally amicable—between ARCE and Chicago House. It was a new and unpleasant experience for the field director to have to justify his expenses to ARCE's administrators and accountants, who in turn had to report to the Smithsonian. As just one example, in January 1970 Nims had to write a letter to ARCE explaining that the funds were not used for capital improvements on the house but rather for maintenance (and a new set of dishes).[202]

Uncertainty also lingered about the continuation of the funding. In February 1964, Nims expressed his hope that "the renewal of the . . . grant is underway."[203] But on April 22, 1964, the Oriental Institute received a dreaded "We are deeply sorry" letter from the State Department that informed the university it would not be receiving further support, ending in the chipper "We hope you will be successful in obtaining financial support from other sources."[204] The termination arose from a new policy of shifting funding away from archaeology to people and programs.† The situation was dire enough that Nims and Adams discussed "the probable necessity of curtailment of our work in case additional funds are not forthcoming." They also examined how the work could be presented in a framework of "cultural relations with Egypt and its people," which might be more aligned with the new funding policy.[205]

Yet the following year, in October 1965, Chicago House received a State Department grant of $22,500,[206] and a further $32,725 for the period July 1, 1965, to September 30, 1966.‡

Political events in Egypt and the region continued to affect the work of the Survey and even threatened its continued operation. In November 1964, anti-American riots broke out in Cairo, and the library of the US Information Service (the outreach branch of the US Information Agency) was burned, motivating the government to post guards at Chicago House. Nims nevertheless reported no unrest in Luxor: "We never felt any change in the

* The program was initiated under Title I of Public Law 83-480 in 1954. The initial award to the Survey was in February 1963 during the last year of Hughes's tenure, but the funds became available under Nims (Nelson to Wilson, 14 February 1963, ISAC Museum Archives). For the program and its impact on Egypt, see US Agency for International Development, "PL 480 Title I: The Egyptian Case," June 1983, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnaal015.pdf.

† A policy the Rockefeller Foundation also then followed.

‡ The equivalents in 2024 of $221,211 and $321,740, respectively, and a large portion of the Survey's annual budget. Unsigned letter to Nims, 24 November 1965, ISAC Museum Archives.

attitude of people hereabouts, or of any difference in government attitudes." However, the American staff could sense that the diplomatic relations between the United States and the United Arab Republic were worsening with the growing influence of the Soviet Union, which was financing and building the Aswan High Dam. As Nims wrote, "With the coming of the Russian group to Cairo yesterday I fear the swing in that direction will continue."[207]

The situation for the Survey worsened because of the Six-Day War (June 5–10, 1967). Although the hostilities took place when the Survey was not in the field, the strong anti-American sentiment led Nims and Oriental Institute director Adams to discuss the very future of the expedition: "At the end of the summer of 1967 the prospects for the immediate continuation of the work of the Epigraphic Survey were uncertain. Diplomatic relations between the United States and the United Arab Republic were severed; our country forbade American citizens to travel in Egypt, and there was little information as to how Americans would be received in that country." Yet in late September, the Egyptian Antiquities Service contacted Nims, sending a message that they "hoped that our work would continue."[208] Nims visited the US Department of State, which suggested that he go to Egypt without his staff "to explore the possibilities of resuming the work of the Epigraphic Survey."* Visas were again a matter of concern, and the State Department questioned whether the one obtained by Nims would even be honored.

In March 1967, Nims wrote to Hughes of the new requirements that each member of any project working for the Department of Antiquities submit an annual questionnaire along with two photos. Nims took the new requirement seriously, noting, "This season the Germans were delayed a month while a security check was made. We cannot afford any such delay."[209] These security clearances continue to be a routine part of work in Egypt to the present day.

Nims went to Cairo in early October 1967 to assess the situation and was told that "the exact line of policy concerning all archaeological work, 45 expeditions in all . . . has not been determined."[210] He met with Gamal Mokhtar, then president of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, about continuing the work in Luxor, only to be told that no decision could be made until the end of the month, but a Mr. Gamil Antaki, a White Russian with connections to the Russian embassy (and a "fixer" for ARCE) assured Nims "the Interior Ministry [Security] has told him that there is no objection to our continuing our work."[211]

An additional complexity arose as a result of the French being allowed to resume archaeological work as a joint mission with the Egyptians. Nims wrote to Adams, "Apparently when the agreement was signed with the French for their restoration at Karnak, it was stipulated that any work there must be accepted by the French and approved by the high committee of antiquities." He added, "While I do not expect any difficulty on this matter, we will have to work in cooperation with the French and be ready to move elsewhere should they wish to work at the Temple of Khonsu."† Considering that Chicago had worked at Khonsu since 1935, ceding the project to the French would have been a tremendous setback and the loss of decades of work.

Once in Luxor in early October, Nims found Chicago House "under security guard and sealed," and he needed permission from the authorities to enter, which was not granted until the end of the month.[212] Once allowed in, he was relieved to see that it was unscathed—indeed, "at the height of resentment against the United States . . . our friends

* Much like Nelson's return to Luxor in 1945 to check the house and the prospects for continued work following World War II. See Nims to Adams, 15 November 1967, ISAC Museum Archives.

† The Franco-Egyptian mission started its work at the temple of Montu in Karnak North. See Nims to Adams, 9 October 1967, ISAC Museum Archives.

in Luxor took particular care that Chicago House was not molested."[213]

Rather than return to the States, Nims called the rest of the staff to come to Luxor for an abbreviated season to begin on November 1. Their visas were again facilitated by Mr. Antaki of ARCE, whom Nims praised by noting there was "certainly no one else who knows his way around as well"; he was able to get their two-week visas extended to two months "in a few minutes."[214] Since Healey did not have the customary two to three weeks to open the house, Nims and the staff did it together, making them appreciate Healey even more. For security reasons, the staff were told not to carry cameras openly, and visitors would not be allowed for the season, although Nims commented, "As far as safety is concerned, I am certain that one is safer here than on the streets of any of our large cities."[215]

The hostilities with Israel continued to impact the Survey well beyond the war itself. In February 1970, Nims wrote to Hughes, "The situation in the Middle East disturbs me. The Israeli bombing of a factory near Cairo, with resulting casualties, by an American-made plane has roused the anger of the Egyptians. If we continue to supply arms to Israel, and if further casualties are suffered, I think there will be a strong reaction against all Americans. The situation in Jordan as of this morning looks very disturbing, as I fear Israel will take the disturbance as an excuse to invade, as they have been talking about lately. I don't see any way to head off this American folly."[216] The security situation required additional clearances to obtain visas, creating more delays and paperwork.[217]

The continuing empowerment of Egyptian workers that came with the nationalist administration presented more headaches for Nims. The Egyptian government instituted a Social Insurance Agency to collect a mandated employer contribution to each Egyptian employee's retirement fund, but the amounts and payments were not clear to Hughes and Nims, who tried to get an explanation of them but "with no success so far."[218] By 1964, Chicago House was making "payments on the long standing fine"[219] without reaching an agreement on the additional moneys demanded by the Social Insurance Agency. Letters periodically refer to premiums paid for staff, especially for the rare instances of severance. But the system was confusing, as Nims described: "The employer is also obligated to pay to the Social Insurance Organization on the retirement or death of an employee such an amount as the Organization may determine to make up the total amount which the employee would have accumulated had he been covered by social insurance in the years before deductions for this purpose were made." The regulations also called for "strict limitation of working hours" and "payment of 24% of wages by the employer over and above the compensation." But for unstated reasons, only 19 percent was being collected, although, Nims noted, "this may be changed at any time to the full amount," leaving Chicago House to earmark funds for the shortfall.[220]

The winding up of the Nubian project proved to be another drag on Nims's time. He was left with unfinished accounts, government red tape, and a fleet of boats that he had to deal with (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963").

Publications under Nims

Medinet Habu—Volume VIII: The Eastern High Gate (OIP 94) appeared in 1970. It was dedicated to Harold Nelson and carried a brief preface by Nims. The volume completed the documentation of the major monuments of Ramesses III at the site. Unlike the previous volumes, it included translations of the texts. As Nims wrote in 1968, "It was the original intent of the Oriental Institute to publish translations and commentary in regard to all texts soon after the publication of a volume of drawings. . . . It is the intention of the expedition to publish translations simultaneously with the appearance of drawings. This has slightly prolonged the editorial work on *Medinet Habu VIII, The Eastern High Gate*."[221] The volume also had ten plates of key plans showing the location of each plate. After *Medinet Habu* VIII, Epigraphic Survey

publications would consist of boxed sheets with a booklet of commentary and translations.

The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II (OINE 1, 1967) also appeared during Nims's tenure (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963").

It was not uncommon for an Epigraphic Survey volume to appear well after it was sent to press and for the preface to be written by a former field director, as was the case with a number of projects on which Nims worked for decades. *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192* (OIP 102) appeared as a joint publication of the Epigraphic Survey and the Department of Antiquities of Egypt in 1980, eight years after his retirement (see chapter 7, "The Tomb of Kheruef, 1954–1980"). His deep involvement was acknowledged by his authoring the brief preface, a detailed discussion of the tomb, and an introduction to the plates.

Although Nims worked on the Khonsu project for years and exclusively for the 1967–71 seasons, the honor of writing the prefaces for *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 1* (1979) and *Volume 2* (1981) fell to Ed Wente and Kent Weeks, respectively.

The Nims-Wente Succession: Academic Considerations

In mid-September 1967, Nims contacted Oriental Institute director Adams to inform him that he intended to retire in early summer 1972, he would not consider extending that date, and furthermore Luxor needed another Egyptologist/epigrapher. These staffing issues foregrounded the need for more strategic thinking in hiring, especially the coordination between staffing in both Luxor and Chicago, for it was assumed that the field director would be a member of the faculty and that potential hires for a faculty position might be tapped to serve in Luxor. But in reality, the relationship of the field director to his colleagues in the Oriental Institute and to the university's Department of Oriental Languages and Civilizations was an unresolved issue. Being in Luxor obviously meant being out of contact with all but one's immediate colleagues, as indicated by the hundreds of letters from Nelson, Hughes, and Nims to Chicago. The relationship between the faculty and the field director was so unclear that in December 1960, Hughes wrote to Wilson inquiring about his (and Nims's) academic status and future: "When is a chicken not a chicken? Are we members of the Department? We know we are members of the Institute. So far it seems to me I haven't been able to break into the Department, except maybe when I taught as a fellow, but when I grew up and got rank, I couldn't make it any longer. I wonder what my Associate Professorship is in. The University, bass?"* Hughes implored Wilson to give him teaching responsibility in the summer and even the winter in an effort to build his resume and to allow him to advance to full professor, a rank he did receive in 1960. But overall, there was the persistent fear of being marginalized, a sentiment only confirmed by Hughes, who recalled having told former director Kraeling, "You will find that people in the field don't pull much weight around here."[222]

The academic promotions of the field directors did not follow the pattern (and schedule) of other faculty in Chicago. For example, Harold Nelson served as field director from 1924 to 1946. He was promoted to associate professor in 1940 and retired from the Survey in 1947 as professor emeritus. He returned to the Chicago area most summers, where he maintained an office in the Oriental Institute, and he kept close contact with Chicago, serving as acting director of the Institute in 1942 and 1943, but there is little record of him teaching.

George Hughes became field director in 1949 with the academic rank of assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor in 1953 and full professor in 1960.

Charles Nims's situation was more complicated. He started with the Survey (seconded to the Sakkarah Expedition) in 1935 as a research assistant before he finished his dissertation in 1937. Unlike Hughes, who held an academic rank, Nims's

* *Bass:* Arabic for "only." Hughes to Wilson, 12 December 1960, ISAC Museum Archives.

primary title was research associate with parenthetical rank of assistant professor until 1970, when he was promoted to associate professor with tenure and the parenthetical title was dropped. Academic rank was a requisite for the field director as the representative of the University of Chicago in Egypt, and the parenthetical rank was used to supply that credential. Nims had very little teaching experience, having taught in 1960–61 to mixed reviews, although Hughes vehemently defended him. In December 1969, Nims stated his preference not to teach for two years so that he could apply himself to the Survey.[223] But he had misgivings about that decision, and in 1970 he wrote to Hughes, "At the moment I feel as if I had made a mistake not to follow up on Klaus' [i.e., Klaus Baer's] suggestion that I let Ed come out here next season and stay home myself and teach. But it couldn't have worked; there is no one else as yet to be photographer, and there needs to be some overlap."[224]

The continuing conundrum was that the field director's position left little time for research that would lead to the publications required for academic advancement, and the director's presence in Luxor for most of the academic year kept him out of touch with his colleagues.

The situation was similar in principle—but different in practice—for the young Egyptologists/epigraphers, most of whom were hired as they started to write their dissertations. The ideal expectation was that they would work on their own research while serving on the Survey. But it became very clear that Nims's desire to have the same epigrapher for multiple seasons and groom him for the field director position—as was Nims's own experience—or to move him into an academic position at Chicago or elsewhere (as with Hughes and Wente) was not realistic. Staying with the Survey, although prestigious, kept younger scholars out of the Chicago mainstream and impeded work on their own academic careers. Additionally, some of the epigraphers were year-round employees, which meant that even their summers were devoted to Survey work rather than to furthering their own research and careers. Hughes, and then Nims, wrote numerous letters of concern about the young epigraphers and the effect of their service in Luxor. In February 1971, Nims expressed concern over "keeping [David] Larkin away from his studies" and said that by staying with the Survey he would be "left behind" his fellow students.[225] Later that month, he expanded: "Then what do we do about Dave? Whether the gravity of the situation demands that we keep him for another year, and so put off his work on his degree, I do not know. I do fear, as I have said, that we are not being very fair to him, and are putting him in an unfavorable position vis-a-vis other students who have stayed there, gotten their degrees, and gone into positions available. I think that Dave is as good as any, and I would like him to get the degree behind him."[226] It was obvious that the workload for an epigrapher in Luxor made it difficult to complete a dissertation, much less produce publications on whose merit academic appointment and promotion were contingent.

The question of Nims's succession came up following the Six-Day War in 1967, a time of renewed uncertainty about the future of Chicago House. Nims wrote, "Perhaps it seems incongruous at a time when the future of our Luxor program still has not been clarified, but I think we should proceed on the assumption that there will be no serious obstacle to our reopening Chicago House."[227]

Nims's favored candidate for field director was Ed Wente, who had proved to be a very capable and valued member of the Luxor expedition in 1959–62 and 1965–67.* In September 1967, Nims wrote to Oriental Institute director Adams, "At the present moment, the only candidate in the Oriental

* Wente had first come to Chicago House in 1956 during the Suez Crisis while he was a Fulbright exchange student at Cairo University. Hughes commented favorably several times on the contributions he made even as an unofficial member of the team that season.

Institute for this position is Professor Wente. He himself must decide whether he wishes to remain at the teaching post or wishes to assume the position of Field Director at Luxor."[228] But the following month, Wente clearly expressed his desire to stay in Chicago, writing to Adams, "It is not my intention to seek actively the directorship of the Luxor epigraphic expedition . . . though it is possible that I might be called upon to serve as acting field director at the time the change [from Nims's directorship] is made. I think it would be wise to consider my replacement's [as epigrapher] qualifications in regard to the field directorship."[229]

Other than Wente, Nims's preferred epigrapher candidates who might be groomed to succeed him were Leonard Lesko and David Larkin. Lesko had worked in Luxor as a "junior epigrapher" for two seasons (1963 and 1964) and had greatly impressed Nims, who wrote, "As a member of the team here I think it would be hard to find anyone to excel Lesko."[230] In 1967, Lesko was in Berkeley, with an appointment as acting assistant professor as he completed his dissertation at Chicago. Although the Chicago faculty was enthusiastic about Lesko, the big question was whether he was likely to come. Wente discussed the possibility of Lesko's relocating with Klaus Baer and reported that "there are some uncertainties regarding the future of Egyptology at Berkeley, and Mr. Lesko has expressed interest in returning to serve on the epigraphic expedition. . . . My impression is that if Chicago were to offer him a position on the expedition as assistant professor, he would accept the offer."[231] But Wente and his colleagues agreed that an academic appointment would be conditional to allow Lesko to prove himself.

David Larkin was a highly regarded graduate student in the department who served as a student epigrapher in the 1966 season and then as a staff member from 1968 to 1971. As noted, Nims expressed concern over the impact of Chicago House on his career.

On Nims's urging, Oriental Institute director Adams sounded out Egyptologists in Chicago about the two candidates. Wente responded, "Lesko demonstrated the greatest ability to master the techniques of epigraphy, and he worked diligently even at those uninspiring yet necessary chores that form part of an epigrapher's routine in the field. . . . I would venture to predict that at the time of Professor Nims' retirement he will be prepared and qualified to assume the responsibilities of field director."[232]

Nims was disappointed that the faculty had not obtained more definite information about Lesko's preference for Chicago versus Berkeley: "While I recognize the cogency of the reasons for this, I am rather disappointed. I had named Larkin only as a possibility in case Lesko was not available, and I feel that I am being left without a really responsible assistant to whom I can turn over work and on whom I can depend to get things done according to our standards. I am going to miss Ed Wente sorely. I had hoped that I might have someone more of his capacity for going on with work without constant supervision." During the search for another epigrapher, he considered junior candidates who might eventually take the top position: "This season I will do my best to develop Carl DeVries and get him to take more initiative in things . . . he is dependable for jobs which he knows well."[233]

DeVries, who had been the acclaimed "kid coach" of the football team while at Wheaton College, was well liked by Nims, who had worked with him since 1965 and hoped the young scholar would stay "indefinitely" with the Survey. Although DeVries was not thought to be the most brilliant Egyptologist, he was reliable; Nims noted that the Survey "needs work horses not race horses" and that DeVries was easy to live with and willing to do all sorts of tasks.[234] However, his wife, Carol, hated Luxor and wanted to return to America, even if Carl had no position there. His prospects for a faculty position were "poor" because of friction with Klaus Baer, who, Nims wrote to Hughes, was "gunning for him."[235]

In February 1971, an anonymous donor offered to support Keith Seele's project to publish

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the Nubian expedition, and Seele offered DeVries a three-year position in Chicago as his assistant. The offer, as well as Seele's request that DeVries go to Cairo to deliver a paper on his behalf, annoyed Nims, who had never been an admirer of Seele. That month, he wrote to Hughes, "I am a bit peeved that the long arm of KCS [Keith C. Seele] can still reach over here into our expedition. I pick up enough here and there to know that he tries to influence both Carl and Ed on matters concerning this expedition."[236] Hughes recognized that Seele was not "raiding" the Survey staff but instead taking advantage of the inevitable—that DeVries wanted to return to Chicago. Hughes mused to Nims that the Seele–DeVries collaboration would not be productive: "I think by adding Carl to the basement we should just be adding another person to stew around and talk about doing things. They would not just add to but multiply each other's fiddling and gabbing, and not a plate would get put together for months at a time."[237] Ultimately, the collaboration was short lived because Keith Seele passed away in July 1971.*

Edward Wente, 1971-1972

Although in October 1967 Wente (fig. 3.23) had declared his willingness to serve as the acting field director at Nims's retirement, Hughes, Nims, and others in Chicago still held hope that he could be convinced to stay in Luxor for five years.[238] But they were also realists, and in late December 1969 Nims advised Hughes, "One matter, however. I think you should request him to give the Oriental Institute at least two years notice if he desires to return. There has to be some time to find his successor."[239]

Wente was slated to take over at the start of the 1971 season; however, he delayed coming to Luxor until January 1972. Even before that time, Nims was tired and ready to relinquish the position.[240] In

Figure 3.23. Left to right: Edward F. Wente, epigrapher (1959–62, 1965–67) and field director (1971–72), with Henri Wild and Adolphe Gutbub, 1956. Photo: Jacquet Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

the second week of the 1969 season, Nims fell from a ladder in the Khonsu Temple and landed squarely on both feet, breaking both of his heels (fig. 3.24). He was further annoyed that Wente had hired a new epigrapher, Charles (Chuck) Van Siclen III, to replace Carl DeVries but was not on hand to train him and introduce him to Chicago House routines. In April 1970, he wrote to Hughes, "Ed and Leila [his wife] should be good people here, and perhaps they will get some new ideas. Myrtle and I have about run out of them."[241] By the end of the year, he confessed to Hughes, "This place is getting on Myrtle's nerves,"[242] one of the few references in hundreds of letters from Nims's tenure as field director to his wife's being anything other than an uncomplaining *mudira*.† Later that month, he again wrote to Hughes: "I have the feeling sometimes that I have rather lost control of things, and I don't know what is going on. . . . I will be happy

* The publication of the Nubian Expedition was resurrected by Bruce B. Williams. Twelve volumes have been published in the Nubian Expedition series since 1983.

† For a different view of Mrs. Nims as "moping around" in 1939, see "Life at Chicago House in the Postwar Years" in chapter 12.

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Figure 3.24. Charles Nims, in a wheelchair as a result of falling from a ladder in the temple. Left to right: Labib Habachi, Grace Huxtable, Carl DeVries (back), Tim Healey, Carlota Fliege, Myrtle Nims, Reginald and Marie Coleman, Martyn Lack, Werner Fliege, Catherine and Richard Turner, Christopher Turner in Nims's lap, November 1969. Photo: David Larkin.

to get away. Myrtle is terribly tired and has not been feeling well the last several days."[243] He clearly wanted to return to Chicago.

Wente also expressed concern about the effect of extended stays at Chicago House on the career of young academics, perhaps because it was an issue that had touched him so recently. He wrote to Hughes: "Like Charlie [*sic*], I do worry about the status of members of our staff here who tend to get discouraged over their future. I think that some rethinking will be necessary along these lines at some point, otherwise Chicago House may become plagued with staffing problems and lack of enthusiasm for the work. It might be a good idea if both Dave [Larkin] and Chuck [Van Siclen] could have a talk with you and feel free to express themselves regarding their service at Chicago House."[244] Among his immediate concerns was who might replace David Larkin, who in 1972 had decided to return to Chicago and finish his dissertation dealing with the end of the Twentieth Dynasty—a topic enriched by his years working on the reliefs in the Khonsu Temple.[245] As Wente wrote to Ethel Schenk,

> I think that what has been difficult to take is the fact that Dave Larkin, who has devoted five seasons to very heavy epigraphic work and has done a splendid job at it, has been sort of lost in the shuffle. He came out last season against his own desire to remain in Chicago to complete his dissertation, and it seems the epigraphic work done out here is not accorded any academic recognition. As an Egyptologist Dave is certainly brilliant and has a fine command of so many diverse aspects of the field. I admire his devotion to the work of the expedition and how he has put our work ahead of his own personal interests.[246]

In March 1972, Wente offered an epigrapher position to William (Bill) J. Murnane, who had been working at Dra Abu el Naga with Lanny Bell of the University of Pennsylvania. He was just finishing his degree in the University of Chicago's Department of History with a thesis on coregencies, a topic that made him well suited for work in Luxor.[247] Murnane was to make many lasting contributions in the fourteen years he worked at Chicago House.

Although Chicago House seemed to be operating smoothly, on February 7, 1972, Wente, who had then served as field director for six weeks, wrote a bombshell letter to Hughes and Nims with a proposal that the Oriental Institute hire Louis Žabkar for the 1972 season and appoint him as field director in 1973, thereby allowing Wente to return to Chicago. He pointed out the advantages, especially that Žabkar was familiar with the Graeco-Roman hieroglyphs that occurred in the Khonsu Temple. Wente expressed his concern that staying on in Luxor would damage his own academic career:

> Since Chicago will be considering a new appointment, probably on the tenured level, it is my strong feeling that the requirements of Chicago House ought to be considered along with those of the department. I am somewhat worried about the future of Egyptology at Chicago, where the trend has been towards appreciation of research that is more abstract and theoretical than the type of work that is carried on out here. I am rather fearful that too prolonged a stay on the expedition may be injurious to my scholarly output and to being a part of new trends in Egyptian philology.[248]

In March, he wrote of an incident—the promotion of Janet Johnson in the department, without soliciting his vote—that seemed only to confirm his fears of isolation from his colleagues in Chicago: "I do feel that I should have been consulted in this matter, since I am still a Professor of Egyptology, but I guess since I am not teaching at the moment, I don't have a say in department matters."[249]

In the totally unexpected February letter to Nims and Hughes, Wente also indicated that he had other projects he wanted to pursue, including the preparation of translations of Ramesside inscriptions with Hans Goedicke of Johns Hopkins University, for which he was considering applying for a Guggenheim Fellowship.[250]

Perhaps reflecting the field director's own lack of enthusiasm for the work at Luxor, morale there seemed to flag. Wente wrote to Hughes, "I have been getting a barrage of unsolicited advice concerning the running of Chicago House and what projects we should be undertaking to supplement the recording of Khonsu. It has been suggested that we should devote only four days per week to Khonsu and on the other two days the individual Egyptologists should be free to utilize the artists to draw material for their own personal research. I am too old-fashioned to go for this and believe our commitment is to Khonsu. But such an attitude is indicative of the frustrations of young Egyptologists out here."[251] Much of this "advice" came from epigrapher Van Siclen, who did "not see the value of continuing to record offering scenes in the Khonsu temple,"[252] a rather bold opinion for a new staff member. Although Van Siclen was not always comfortable in the social surroundings of Chicago House, Wente admired him, writing to Ethel Schenk, "He is first rate and a great asset to the work of the expedition. . . . He has very good organizational ability, and possibly would make a good director someday."[253]

During the 1971 and 1972 seasons, the Survey under Wente worked exclusively in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall at the Khonsu Temple. The historical problems posed by the reliefs of Herihor and Pinudjem were of particular interest to Wente, who specialized in the late Ramesside period.

Kent Weeks, Charles C. Van Siclen, and Lanny Bell: New Attitudes and New Directions, 1973–1988

The Kent Weeks Years, 1973–1975

Despite Hughes's and Nims's hope that Wente would continue for at least five years, in March 1973 he returned to Chicago to join the faculty. Considering the problems that Chicago had in replacing Nims in 1971, finding another director so soon was difficult. The two candidates were Louis Žabkar, whom Wente had favored to be his replacement,[254] and Kent Weeks, then at the American University in Cairo. Although Weeks admitted that he had no talent as an epigrapher, he was selected on the basis of his scholarship, his experience in dealing with the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, his fundraising record, and his contacts with the PL 480 program administrators. Another advantage was that he and his wife, Susan, an accomplished artist, and their two small children, Christopher and Emily, enjoyed living in Egypt (fig. 3.25). But by his own recollection, "the single biggest reason was probably that, in the early 70s, no one at the OI wanted to move to Egypt or was seen by senior OI staff as 'ready.'"[255]

Weeks set new directions for the Survey. He continued the work at Khonsu in an effort to complete the first volume, which covered the scenes of

Figure 3.25. Staff and guests, December 1973. Top: John Wilson, Hagg Ibrahim, Jim Allen, Omm Seti (Dorothy Eady), Reg Coleman, Labib Habachi, John Romer, Bill Murnane, Hany el-Zeini, Atteya Habachi; three visiting students, Hassan (Shafi's son, in front of students), Mahmoud Abdellahi, unidentified babysitter. Bottom: Winas, Marwan Duwy (house manager), Sadeq (cook), Martyn Lack, Marie Coleman, Grace Huxtable, Phyllis Lack, Beth Romer, Kent and Christopher Weeks, Andrée Bichara, Susan Allen, Susan and Emily Weeks, Mahmoud Abd el-Rahman, Abdel Zaher, Shafei, Taya, unidentified gardener. Photo: J. Ross, Abdellahi album.

Herihor in the Court. He was especially concerned about the impending end of PL 480 funds and looked for other sources of support. He was also very conscious of and concerned about the slow rate at which Epigraphic Survey publications appeared and how it affected funding. After consulting with Wente and epigraphers Bill Murnane and James Allen, he started two "short-term" projects that could be published, as he put it, "in a few years, not a few decades."[256]

The first project was the battle reliefs of Sety I on the north exterior wall of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (see "The Battle Reliefs of Sety I at Karnak, 1973–1976" in chapter 5). Work on the Sety reliefs, begun in 1973, was completed in the 1975 season as scheduled.

The second project under Weeks was the cleaning and documentation of the Opet reliefs in the Colonnade Hall at Luxor, for which permission was granted in 1973 and work begun in 1975 after the completion of the Sety I project (see chapter 6, "Luxor Temple, 1937, 1975–").

Another project for which Chicago received permission under Weeks was the documentation of the tomb of Nefersekheru (TT 107) in western Thebes (fig. 3.26). This tomb was selected because of the relation of its reliefs to those in the tomb of Kheruef. Although it was announced in 1973 that work was to begin in the tomb, no further references were made about the project until 2009.

Another contribution of the Weeks years was the addition of lexical indexes to the publications, compiled from the extensive dictionary cards maintained at Chicago House. The first publication to include this feature was *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 2: Scenes and Inscriptions in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall* (OIP 103), which appeared in 1981.

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Figure 3.26. The tomb of Nefersekheru (TT 107) in western Thebes, which became a Survey project in 1973. Photo: J. Ross.

Weeks considered other projects to pursue at Karnak once the Sety I reliefs were finished, including the Akh-Menou temple of Thutmose III, the outer south wall of the Hypostyle Hall, and the work of Hatshepsut, "but no decisions had been taken on any of those."[257] Chicago never undertook those projects.

As part of Weeks's vision to "reinstate the 'architectural' part of our name," the Oriental Institute annual reports for 1974 and 1975 were titled "Epigraphic and Architectural Survey." He proposed a project to prepare a "detailed series of maps of archaeological sites on the west bank" and publish them as sheet maps and also in "a smaller handbook-sized version" for use in the field.[258] The results of this project included the *Chicago House Map and Mini Guide* of Luxor, with maps and plans by Survey artist Carol Meyer and extensive text by Lanny Bell. It was published years later, in 1988, in collaboration with Cassandra Vivian of the American University in Cairo Press, who wanted to start a new publication series. Of greater consequence, and a direct outgrowth of the proposed new project for Chicago House, was the Theban Mapping Project that Weeks instituted in 1978, two years after he left Chicago House. His invaluable *Atlas of the Valley of the Kings* appeared in 2000.*

As a part of the fundraising efforts, and especially the effort to raise the profile of the Epigraphic Survey, Weeks proposed that Bill Murnane write a more accessible guide to Medinet Habu. The publication, *United with Eternity: A Concise Guide to the Monuments of Medinet Habu*, was illustrated with epigraphic drawings and featured a foreword by Weeks. Published jointly by the Oriental Institute and the American University in Cairo Press in 1980, it was distributed to potential donors as an

* This project is now hosted by ARCE and is available online at https://arce.org/theban-mapping-project-tmp/.

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introduction to, and argument for, the Chicago House Method and its results.[259]

The epigraphic staff in the Weeks years comprised Murnane and his fellow Chicago scholars, James Allen and Frank Yurco. Artists were Reg Coleman, Martyn Lack, and John Romer (fig. 3.27). They were joined by a new artist, Clare Sampson (1973–74), who replaced Grace Huxtable, thus continuing a female presence among the professional staff. John Ross was photographer. Artist Rick Turner, who had been on staff from 1968 to 1972, did not return until 1976.

Publications under Weeks

The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 2: Scenes and Inscriptions in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall was published in 1981 as OIP 103 with a preface by Weeks. It appeared well after Weeks left the Survey.

Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I (OIP 107) appeared in 1986. This project was more closely associated with Weeks because he had initiated it (see "The Battle Reliefs of Sety I at Karnak, 1973–1976" in chapter 5).

Charles C. Van Siclen III, 1976

Weeks left the Epigraphic Survey at the end of the 1975 season to join the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley because he did not receive a tenured position in Chicago. In early 1975, Charles C. Van Siclen III (fig. 3.28), who had served as epigrapher and librarian during the 1971–72 seasons, was asked by professors Ed Wente and Klaus Baer and Oriental Institute director John Brinkman to assume the position of field director; accordingly, in early 1975, he worked closely with Weeks to ensure continuity of leadership. Van Siclen received a specific charge of "getting back on track" with epigraphy and turning away from Weeks's emphasis on architecture,[260] and indeed his Oriental Institute annual report for 1976–77 reverted to the old heading "Epigraphic Survey." But in spring 1976, Van Siclen was informed that the position had been offered to, and accepted by, Lanny Bell, then at the University of Pennsylvania. Bell asked that the appointment be delayed by a year, however, leaving Van Siclen with a title that was a surprise to him: acting field director rather than field director.

Figure 3.27. Group at Medinet Habu, 1973. Top: Reg Coleman, Phyllis and Martyn Lack, Clare Sampson, Beth Romer, Susan Allen, Kent Weeks, Frank Yurco, John Romer. Bottom: Marie Coleman, Bill Murnane, Andrée Bichara, Susan and Christopher Weeks, James Allen, Dianne Yurco. Photo: J. Ross.

The 1976 season under Van Siclen was dedicated to continuing the work on the Opet reliefs in the Colonnade Hall at Luxor. The epigraphers (Murnane, Yurco, and Mark Smith) and the artists (Coleman, Romer, Turner, and Frank Howard) started work on the photographs of the Small Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu.*

* The Survey worked in the Small Temple briefly in 1935, drawing the scenes on the south wall of the barque shrine.

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Figure 3.28. Charles (Chuck) Van Siclen III, acting field director 1976. Photo: K. Scott.

Figure 3.29. Lanny Bell, field director 1977–88, and his wife, Martha Rhodes Bell, 1985. Photographer unknown.

The Lanny Bell Years, 1977-1988

In fall 1977, Lanny Bell, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania who was well known to Chicago House from his own work in western Thebes but had never before worked for the Survey, assumed the position of field director (fig. 3.29). Although Van Siclen returned to the staff for the beginning of Bell's first season, friction between them caused him to leave (though he returned in 1983 to serve as Bell's administrative assistant) to pursue his own research at Karnak, to concentrate on his publishing business (Van Siclen Books), and, in 1985, to start his own academic journal, *Varia Aegyptiaca*. Lanny was accompanied by his wife, Martha Rhodes Bell, a scholar of Mediterranean archaeology who enthusiastically embraced the role of *mudira*.

By 1979, the team returned to Medinet Habu to work at the Small Temple of Amun (fig. 3.30). In 1980, Bell had the epigraphers start hand-copying the scenes in the chapels, a task they finished in 1984 (fig. 3.31). Electric lights, installed in 1981, facilitated this work, which coincided with cleaning of the reliefs; as more details became visible, the drawings had to be revised. The hand copies were finally checked and collated in the 1985–87 seasons.

These hand copies are distinct from the usual Chicago House Method, for they are not based on photography. They were freehand "approximations of the figures and texts in each scene, with notes indicating the location of certain details that posed questions in terms of reading."[261] Bell explained that these hand copies were necessary because of their "great value in planning our overall approach to solving the problems of recording this monument, and should assist us greatly in establishing the special artistic conventions required and in applying them consistently throughout. They will also help the artists when penciling in their photographic enlargements at the wall, in order to minimize the corrections which have to be made later; and they have already permitted our Egyptologists to begin preparing translations and commentaries, research parallels and suggest restorations, and write dictionary cards."[262]

The conservation program for the Small Temple began in earnest in 1981 when Bell added

They produced a plate of half of that wall (Nelson to Breasted, 14 February 1935, CHP 1233). Although the work did not progress, some of those early drawings were published in W. J. Murnane, *United with Eternity: A Concise Guide to the Monuments of Medinet Habu* (Chicago: Oriental Institute and Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1980), 78.

Figure 3.30. The Small Temple of Amun, viewed from the east, 1929. The Eighteenth Dynasty chapels are to the rear and the Kushite Pylon is at center right. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Richard and Helena Jaeschke to the team. Through 1984, they cleaned and gap-filled the walls of the Eighteenth Dynasty chapels, removing millennia of black soot and grime and revealing the astounding amount of bright pigment preserved on the chapel walls.

Structural work was also undertaken—a definite departure from the usual activities of Chicago House, but increasingly necessary as conditions in Luxor began to change. By 1983, a skylight was installed to cover a hole in the ceiling that admitted rain, which had left streaks of precipitated salts on the reliefs, and doors were installed on the chapels. Later seasons (1986 and 1987) saw the installation of wood floors in the chapels to prevent dust from settling on the newly cleaned walls, and gap filling and tinting by conservators Christel Faltermeier and Rudolf Meyer in 1988.

In 1986, Tom Van Eynde made large-format black-and-white photos of the walls, and in the 1988 and 1989 seasons, Van Eynde, Sue Lezon, and Danny Lanka produced large-format color photography of the chapels. Bell and Lezon anticipated that the color plates would be published separately from the facsimile drawings as a sort of art presentation. The color photography and the planned folio, which was secondarily intended to assist with fundraising, was underwritten by Walter Tower of Nimrod Press in Chicago.*

* Twenty-nine color photos appeared in *Medinet Habu* IX (2009), along with facsimile drawings and additional black-and-white images. No separate color volume was issued.

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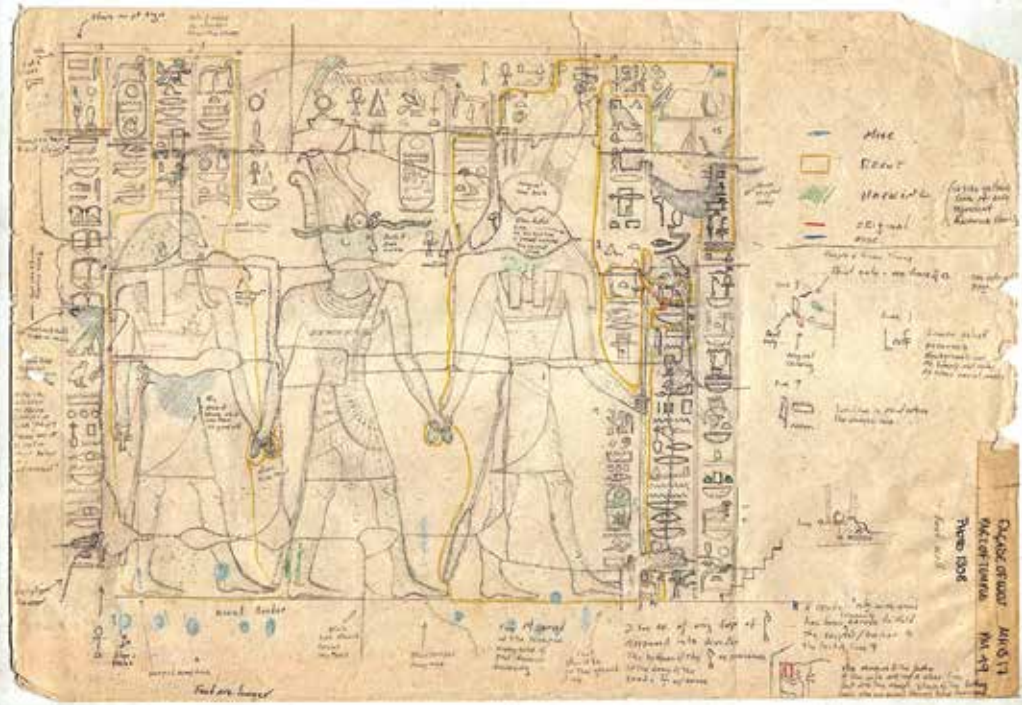

Figure 3.31. Hand copy of reliefs from the Small Temple of Amun, ca. 1982. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

Staffing under Bell

The 1980 season saw the professional staff reduced because of cuts in the dollar (hard currency) budget. Only two Egyptologists (Murnane and Bernard Fishman), rather than three epigraphers, and only two artists (W. Raymond Johnson and Thad Rasche) took to the field. But the budget issues were resolved the following season, and the team again included three epigraphers (adding Richard Jasnow, then a student who worked in the 1981 season and returned in 1989 under Peter Dorman, by then the field director).

Overall, there was a lot of turnover among the epigraphic staff. Thirteen epigraphers worked for Bell, six of them serving a single year: Peter Piccione (who later served as an administrative assistant), Jasnow, Dorman, Lorelei Corcoran (the second female epigrapher since 1926), Eddie Walker, and Stephen Parker.* A few epigraphers stayed for longer terms. Bill Murnane, who started under Wente, spent nine years with Bell; Steven Shubert and Fishman both stayed for three years, and Mark Ciccarello for two.

The artists under Bell were more stable. Egyptologist Ray Johnson (fig. 3.32) began his long career at Chicago House in spring 1978, when he joined the team as a student artist after the University of Chicago's first field season at Quseir el-Qadim, where he had been working as a field artist. In 1979 Johnson joined the team full-time, staying on at Chicago House and eventually serving as field director from 1996 to 2021. Three artists, Reg Coleman (in Luxor since 1957), Rick Turner, and Frank Howard started before Bell and left within Bell's first few seasons. Thad Rasche, who was to make significant contributions to defining the artistic conventions, worked for four seasons (1978–81). Salvatore Garfi and Barbara Garfi (both 1982–84) and Peter Der Manuelian (1984–86) were in Luxor for three seasons, and Barbara Arnold for four (1985–88). Helena Jaeschke worked as an artist

* Heinz-Josef Thissen of the University of Cologne joined the Survey for the 1986 season to undertake a "specialized project" on the Demotic graffiti.

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Figure 3.32. Artist Ray Johnson in his studio, 1988. Photo: S. Lezon.

for two seasons (1983–84) while she and her husband Richard were conservators at Medinet Habu in 1981–84. Several artists stayed for a single season (Paul Hoffman, 1982; Kathleen Baker, 1987). Vivienne Groves worked for Bell's last season and stayed for Dorman's first. Carol Meyer (known to many as "Cairo") and Susan (Sue) Osgood both joined the Survey under Bell in 1985 and went on to have long careers—Meyer until 1991, and Osgood to the present day. The checking and correction of drawings continued through the mid-1980s, generally with a staff of three or four artists (1982, 1983, 1987) or even five (1984–86). Notable is the passing of the "old guard" represented by Reg Coleman and the artists now being a much younger cohort.

There was also some turnover in the position of photographer. Several served for a single season (Eric Krause, 1977; Michael Langenstein, 1978; Diana Olson, 1981; Robert Cedarwall, 1985). Karen Krause was in Luxor for two seasons (1979 and 1980). Danny Lanka began in Bell's last year and stayed for Dorman's first three. Several photographers who made a major impact on the Survey joined under Bell. Sue Lezon, who was to serve as photographer, archivist, photographic conservator, and many other related roles, and who worked in Luxor (with some interruptions) for the next four decades, started in 1982. Tom Van Eynde was the sole photographer in 1986, then worked in tandem with Lezon in 1987–89, and for another two seasons under Dorman.

The rupture between Murnane and Bell in 1986, partly over authority at Chicago House after Murnane was appointed assistant director, almost provided the solution to a long-standing problem—the "missing" translations for *Medinet Habu* III–VII and the first two Karnak volumes. Murnane explored options for activities during the duration of his contract, which ran through the 1988 season, that would not require his presence in Luxor. He proposed to Oriental Institute director Janet Johnson that he produce the translations, but the offer was apparently not accepted and the translations were not produced.[263]

The year 1979 saw the true end of an era with the death of the Survey's *reis*, Hagg Ibrahim, who had held that position since 1945 (fig. 3.33) and who had worked in different capacities for the Epigraphic Survey since 1928.[264]

Fundraising under Bell

By necessity, much of Bell's time was devoted to fundraising, because the PL 480 program on which the Survey had relied for years was to end in 1985. In early financial forecasts, the Oriental Institute estimated that Chicago House would have to raise about $100,000 annually.[265] The private sector seemed the most promising for donations. Bell presented a budget and plan to Oriental Institute director Adams that relied heavily on public relations and publicity. He reported that National

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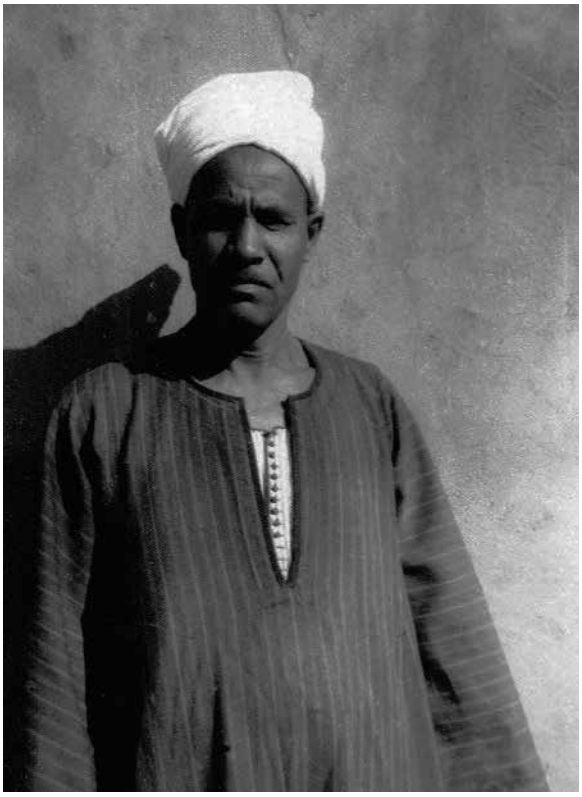

Figure 3.33. Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed, who started at Chicago House in 1928 and served as *reis* from 1945 to 1978, ca. 1963. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Geographic had produced a documentary, "The Quest for Eternity," that featured Chicago House; that he had prepared a slide presentation of its work that could be shown to potential donors; and that the Survey had printed T-shirts designed by Johnson and Rasche. He further mentioned revenue from the sale of Murnane's *United with Eternity*, and he also suggested they could sell a reduced-format edition of the Medinet Habu volumes that might appeal to a wider audience.[266] The latter idea was abandoned because of the expense and the uncertain appeal.

Bell also gave innumerable library tours at Chicago House, during which visitors were introduced to the mission and work of the Survey. These tours took considerable time but turned many potential funders into actual supporters. Bell was assisted by Jill (Carlotta) Maher (fig. 3.34), who originated the idea of paid tours, organized events, and handwrote sheaves of letters to donors and potential donors.[267] Initially, the tours included the library as well as the residence wing, to give visitors an idea of life at the house, but by the late 1990s they were restricted to the library and perhaps a reception in the residence courtyard or tea room.[268]

By 1986, the idea of a Friends of Chicago House (FOCH) group became more organized when, following a tour of Luxor, Ron and Ann Wolfe, who lived in Cairo, organized and based the group there to reach out to members of the expatriate business community and to US corporations operating in Egypt.[269] Some of their efforts resulted in substantial gifts, and many advocates for the Survey raised awareness among the American expat, corporate, and US government community in Cairo about the Survey's preservation work in Luxor. Not unexpectedly, however, the FOCH events distracted Bell from the core mission. One artist recalled that Bell had to devote a lot of time to the increasingly elaborate annual FOCH tours: "I start pushing for checking [of drawings] sessions so I can finish something before I leave. That's not much time. Lanny knows it on one level, but everything has been pushed aside for the tour."[270] On some occasions, Bell was so occupied with administrative matters that the epigraphers and artists were left on their own to determine what conventions they should follow. His workload also meant that he rarely visited the temple to oversee the on-site work.[271]

Publications under Bell

The Epigraphic Survey published three volumes during Bell's tenure: *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 1: Scenes of King Herihor in the Court* (OIP 100, 1979); *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 2: Scenes and Inscriptions in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall* (OIP 103, 1981); and *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (OIP 107, 1986). He was not associated with the Khonsu projects, and since the Sety volume was so closely associated with Kent Weeks, Weeks contributed the preface, although

Figure 3.34. Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to Lanny Bell and an indefatigable fundraiser for Chicago House, 1987. Photo: B. Burgess.

Bell is acknowledged as field director in the volume's list of Egyptologists. *United with Eternity* (1980) appeared under Murnane's name with a preface by Weeks, who had conceptualized the project.

Peter Dorman, W. Raymond Johnson, and J. Brett McClain: Conservation and Documentation, 1989–2024

The Peter Dorman Years, 1989–1996

The death of Klaus Baer in 1987 created a faculty vacancy in Chicago. A logical choice for the position was Lanny Bell, who was already tenured at Chicago. As one of his colleagues recalled, "If he wants the post they just about have to give it to him as there is no chance of creating a new Egyptology position."[272] Bell resigned from Chicago House in early summer 1987 and, apparently confident of his appointment in Chicago, set his departure from Luxor in July 1992 to allow him "time to train the successor and finish up the Luxor temple volumes or at least the plates."[273] He miscalculated, however, for the department was indeed able to hire for an additional position; furthermore, they advised Bell that they needed the new faculty member to start in October 1988, not 1992.

The candidates for the Chicago position were Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert, Robert Ritner, and Peter Dorman (fig. 3.35), the latter two being graduates of the University of Chicago. In 1988, Dorman, then at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was offered and accepted the position, and he taught in Chicago that fall quarter. Although hired to fill Baer's position, Dorman initially was offered a research associate position as field director of Chicago House, but he demurred until the original offer of a tenure-track faculty position was reinstated. He served as associate director of the Survey for the 1988 season, working alongside Bell for four months in the traditional manner of transition between old and new directors, and assumed the position of field director on July 1, 1989.

Bell returned to Chicago, where he taught until he took early retirement in 1996 to move to the East Coast. There, for a number of years, he served as a lecturer at Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design, and Columbia University.*

Under Dorman, the Survey initially operated as in the recent past: working in the Small Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu, recording the reliefs on the walls and columns of the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple, and cataloging and studying the blocks around Luxor Temple.

* After a long illness, Bell passed away in August 2019. See P. Lacovara, "In Memoriam Lanny David Bell," *JARCE* 57 (2021): 5–6.

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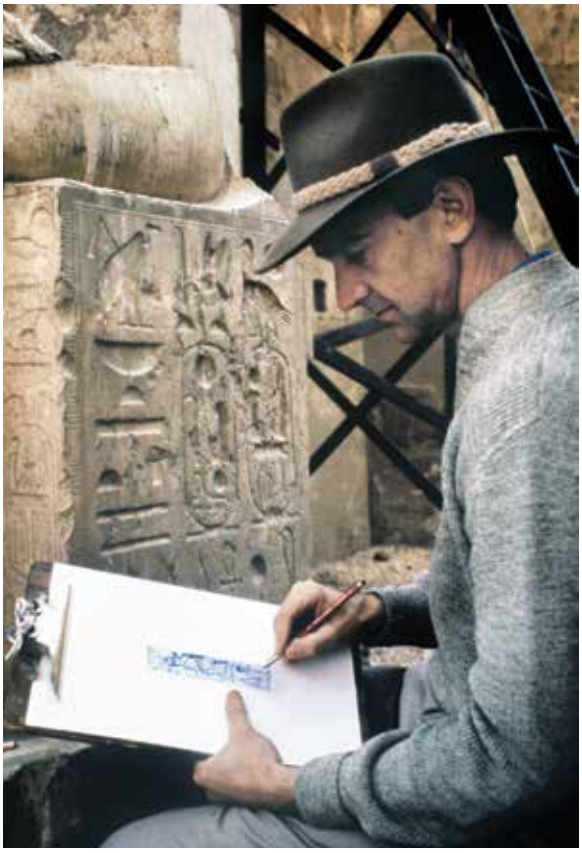

Figure 3.35. Peter Dorman, field director 1989–96. Photo: S. Lezon.

However, Dorman sought a new direction at Medinet Habu. As he wrote in his first independent annual report on the 1989 season, he had taken "a hard look at the project." What he found was not good news: "It was discovered that virtually all the exterior views of the small temple must be redone, since the existing photographs are either too small to be used, poorly lighted, out of plumb, or incomplete in their coverage." In other words, the project was back to the start. Dorman also wrote, "Photography at the small temple will be a major priority for next season, as it represents the first step in the epigraphic process for any survey project."[274] Through the 1990s, the Survey recorded the scenes in the Thutmoside chapels, then moved to the barque sanctuary area, which posed its own challenges because the entire interior of the sanctuary had been recarved in the time of Ptolemy VIII and decorated with painted details. In 1991, the complicated process of making the first photographic documentation of the barque shrine and its peripteros since the 1930s was undertaken, requiring the combined efforts of Tom Van Eynde, Cecile Keefe, James Riley, and Elinor (Ellie) Smith, who draped the entire area in tarps to control the lighting.[275]

Photography took on a new urgency in the late 1990s with heightened awareness of the rate at which the Egyptian monuments were being damaged or destroyed. One of the greatest dangers was rising groundwater, caused primarily by intensive irrigation of the cane fields in Luxor. Dorman wrote, "The ES must expand its photographic operations considerably in order to keep up with the rapidly accelerating deterioration of the pharaonic monuments." Part of this effort was a program of scanning archival negatives that preserved now-vanished features of monuments and exploring "new techniques for analyzing and presenting that computerized material."[276]

The award of a five-year Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) grant through ARCE in 1996 (extended through 2006) expanded the scope of the work at Medinet Habu, funding further cleaning and conservation of the walls and introducing "protective measures that would safeguard the building and its inscribed walls"[277] along with recovery, documentation, and publication of reused blocks at the site.

The foundations of the Small Temple were examined by structural engineer Conor Power and conservators John Stewart and Hiroko Kariya in the 1996 season. They recommended that the foundations be exposed, documented, and then reburied. Excavation of the foundations in the area of the Ptolemaic Hall by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities revealed 400 blocks, many of them with reliefs from a Kushite-era (ca. 747–656 BC) structure. Helen Jacquet-Gordon and Jean Jacquet, who undertook the initial study of these blocks, concluded that there had once been an earlier Kushite colonnade. This extension of the

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Eighteenth Dynasty temple was to form a focus of the Survey's work in later years. Other trenching work recovered the well-preserved statue of a priest who served both the Small Temple of Amun and the sanctuary of the deified Amenhotep Son of Hapu at Deir el-Bahari (fig. 3.36).[278]

Work on the roof of the Small Temple was again a priority, for although rain was infrequent, when it occurred water seeped through the faulty roof joins, leaving streaks on the walls and precipitating the growth of salt that further damaged the reliefs. In the 1997 season, stonemason Dany Roy cleaned the roof, documented its construction, and commissioned new blocks of sandstone from the quarry at Gebel Silsila to match the original stone roof (fig. 3.37). The project restored the channels that direct rainwater off the roof. Conservator Lotfi Hassan and his team resumed cleaning the walls, particularly those that had been stained with rainwater, and ended up recleaning everything that had been done previously. Jaroslav (Yarko) Kobylecky and Lezon then rephotographed the walls. The EAP grant continued long into Ray Johnson's term as field director and allowed the Survey to stabilize, protect, and continue the documentation of the temple.

Figure 3.36. Statue of the priest of the sanctuary of the deified Amenhotep Son of Hapu at Deir el-Bahari, discovered at Medinet Habu during the 1996 season. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Like his predecessors, Dorman spent a substantial but necessary amount of time and effort on fundraising. A major issue was the stability of the Egyptian pound. In some years, 1991 for example, a strong pound worked in the Survey's favor. But in 1995, a dramatic drop in interest rates erased a third of its operating income. Assistant to the director Carlotta Maher continued to play a major role in donor development. She persuaded many individuals to give generous gifts for naming opportunities at the house, resulting in the senior artist's suite being named for longtime Oriental Institute supporter Mrs. Carolyn Livingood, and the photo studio eventually being named in honor of Carlotta and David Maher by their friends and family. The FOCH programs continued (see "Life at Chicago House, 1931–" in chapter 12), and in 1990 Dorman instituted the *Chicago House Bulletin*, issued three times a year with news from the field as well as articles by staff members about their own interests and general "goings-on" at the House.* It was sent to everyone on the Survey's mailing list and helped raise awareness of its mission.

The mid-1990s saw a new level of financial stability. In 1995, with the urging of Ambassador Frank Wisner and the assistance of W. Benson Harer Jr., the US Congress passed legislation creating an endowment for the operating expenses of the Epigraphic Survey, with the funds to be administered by ARCE

* Available at https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/chicago-house-bulletins. Under Dorman's successor, Ray Johnson, the *Bulletin* was expanded in content, printed in color, and distributed once a year each summer.

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Figure 3.37. Dany Roy working in the Small Temple of Amun, 1997. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

and the interests of Chicago House to be overseen by financial advisor Thomas Heagy.* This endowment was crucial for the Survey (and for ARCE and the Binational Fulbright Commission) after the PL 480 funding program—on which the Survey had relied since 1963—expired in 1985.

The act also created a $20 million fund for EAP projects administered by ARCE, which had a dramatic impact on the Survey's work. In 1995, Chicago received a seven-year EAP grant for conservation and protective storage of the blocks at Luxor Temple, and then, in 1996, a ten-year EAP grant for work at the Small Temple at Medinet Habu. Both grants allowed additional staff, especially conservators, to be hired. The grants created a new conservation focus for the Epigraphic Survey but were negotiated to support documentation as well. Although this shift was not without controversy, it was a sign of the times that conservation and preservation had to be added to the Epigraphic Survey programs, especially since this assistance was officially requested by the Supreme Council of Antiquities to help it address the alarming acceleration of the monuments' decay. By the late 1990s, with the EAP grants and the endowment, Chicago House was in its most secure financial condition since 1935.

Staffing under Dorman

The cast of epigraphers and artists was generally consistent during Dorman's eight seasons as field director (fig. 3.38). Of the Egyptologists, John Darnell and Deborah Darnell were in Luxor for most or all of Dorman's entire tenure (with Debbie continuing on afterward). Andrew Baumann served for four seasons (1993–96).† Richard Jasnow,

* The same legislation created a separate endowment for ARCE and the Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt.

† Baumann crossed over the roles of artist and epigrapher, serving as an epigrapher in 1993 and 1996, as artist in 1994, and as artist/epigrapher in 1995.

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Figure 3.38. Staff photo, 1990 season. Top: Richard Jasnow, Tina Di Cerbo, Peter Piccione, Sue Lezon. Middle: Carol Meyer, Henri Riad, Carlotta Maher, Saleh Shehat, Kathy and Peter Dorman. Bottom: Emily Dorman, John and Debbie Darnell, Ray Johnson, Jay Heidel, Sue Osgood, Margaret Dorman. Photo: D. Lanka.

who had been a student epigrapher in 1981, served in Luxor for the 1989–94 seasons, and he returned often in later years to work on graffiti at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temple. Edward (Ted) Castle came to Luxor in Dorman's next-to-last year and returned for Johnson's first four full seasons.

The group of artists was also stable, with each serving multiple years. Senior artist Ray Johnson continued his long run, and Carol Meyer and Sue Osgood, who started under Lanny Bell, stayed on with Dorman—Meyer through 1991, while Osgood today remains senior artist. Margaret De Jong came to Luxor in 1992. Christina (Tina) Di Cerbo joined the artists in 1989 and, over the years, has become an invaluable and multitalented member of the staff (she continues at Chicago House to this day and is also an accomplished Egyptologist). Tina has led the study of graffiti at Medinet Habu, and she is responsible for the incredibly labor-intensive task of opening and closing the house each season and overseeing its maintenance.

Sue Lezon (fig. 3.39) continued as photographer, being joined by Tom Van Eynde (1986–89, 1991–92). Cecile Keefe was in Luxor for two seasons (1991 and 1992), and Yarko Kobylecky joined the staff in 1993 and continues to this day. The scope and number of photographers and assistants grew as their work expanded in 1989, when Dorman when was able to secure a $125,000 grant for the preservation of the photo archives from the

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Figure 3.39. Sue Lezon working on prints for the publication *Lost Egypt*, 1992. Photo: C. Keefe.

Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, and another $139,000 grant from Getty in 1990 for supplies to house the collection. Lezon led the program, making duplicates of old, fragile, or unstable negatives and ensuring that copies of the photos were also archived in Chicago. Several photo assistants were added to take on the extra work. Ellie Smith, who began in 1989, continued to number, register, and shelve new negatives while assisting the photographer in the field (fig. 3.40). Other photographic assistants included Nan Ray, Di Grodzins, Mary Grimshaw, and Charlie Secchia. Among the material were thousands of images from the Labib Habachi archive, some of which were converted from glass plates. A team consisting of Henri Riad, Jean Jacquet, Helen Jacquet-Gordon, and John Darnell identified the images, and the photo assistants entered them into the growing database and housed them. This project continued throughout Dorman's tenure.

World politics in the 1990s presented challenges. The 1990–91 Gulf War necessitated the evacuation of two of the photographic staff. On the bright side, the absence of tourists at the sites afforded the artists and epigraphers "the privilege of working in almost complete isolation in Luxor Temple," where "the penciling of enlargements, the work of collation, and the frequent joint conferences could take place at the wall with no distractions whatsoever."[279] But 1997, Ray Johnson's first full year as director, saw the horrific massacre of sixty-two tourists and Egyptians at Deir el-Bahari and the collapse of tourism that again left the team in isolation. That event and other sporadic acts of terrorism created a sense of insecurity. The government responded by posting additional guards at the entry of Chicago House, but the work continued peacefully.

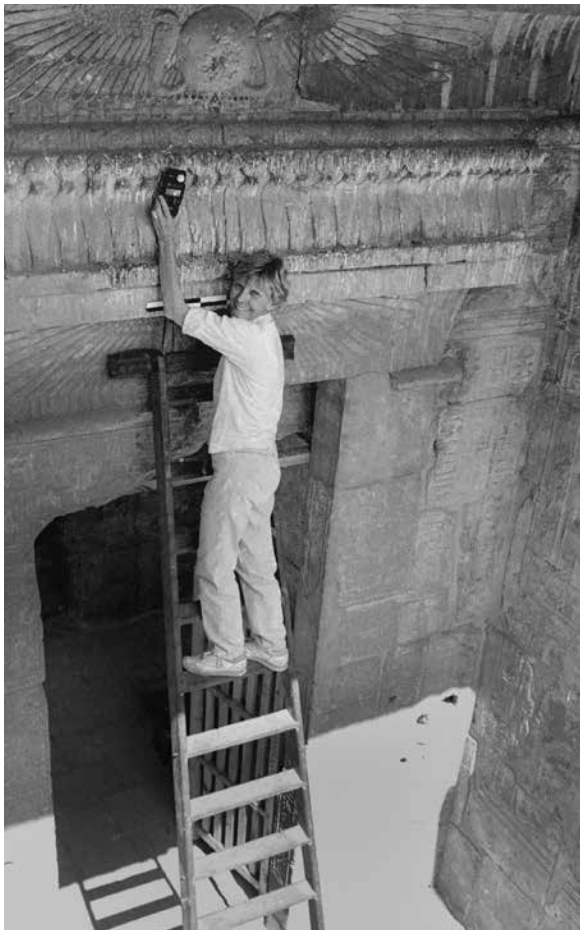

Figure 3.40. Elinor (Ellie) Smith, longtime photo and archive assistant, taking a light reading and positioning a meter stick at the Small Temple of Amun, 2001. Photo: S. Lezon.

By the mid-1990s, Dorman started to consider returning to Chicago, partly because of the separation from his family, as his wife, Kathy, and their daughters increasingly stayed in Chicago so that the girls could have more continuity in their schooling (see "Life at Chicago House, 1931–" in chapter 12). The matter was settled in spring 1997 when he returned to Chicago to resume teaching, and Ray Johnson (fig. 3.41), who had by then served as an artist for the Survey for eighteen years, became the eleventh field director. He was to serve in that capacity for twenty-five seasons, eclipsing the overall tenure at Chicago House of Harold Nelson.

The faculty in Chicago debated the decision to appoint Johnson because he would be the first regular field director who was a research associate of the Oriental Institute with the parenthetical rank of assistant professor but did not have a faculty position.* Dorman's letter of recommendation stated, "It is very unfortunate that the Survey—the flagship field operation of the Oriental Institute, the major American research presence in Egypt, and an outstanding representative of University scholarship in the Middle East—can no longer be directed by a full member of the faculty."[280] But there was simply no better qualified candidate. Johnson's deep knowledge of Survey operations, his good relations with Egyptian officials, and his publication record made him the obvious choice. Oriental Institute director William Sumner acknowledged this disruption of long-standing academic tradition when he forwarded the Institute's recommendation to the provost's office: "It should be noted that several members of the faculty expressed serious concern over the fact that the position will not be filled by a faculty member, preferably with tenure, whose training is as an Egyptologist with an epigraphic specialization. It should be noted that these views were expressed by individuals who explicitly approve of the appointment of Johnson. I concur with these reservations and strongly recommend that a careful review should be conducted at the time of any future appointment to the directorship at Chicago House."†

Figure 3.41. Ray Johnson, field director 1996–2021, shown in his office at Chicago House, 2018. Photo: S. Lezon.

Once in Chicago, Dorman experienced the same issues with his integration into the faculty as most previous field directors. He had been a faculty member for nine years, and he had been promoted to associate professor, but without tenure. His appointment to Chicago House made it nearly impossible for him to produce the books and

* Chuck Van Siclen, who did not have a faculty position, served as interim director in 1976. The situation was more complicated for Charles Nims (field director 1963–71). In 1963, he failed to be promoted "to rank with tenure" (21 November 1962, ISAC Museum Archives), and at the time of his appointment, he was a research associate with the parenthetical rank of assistant professor. In 1970 he was promoted to associate professor (Nims to Hughes, 17 April 1970, ISAC Museum Archives).

† Sumner to I. Gould (associate provost), 6 June 1996, ISAC Director's Office correspondence, used with permission. This decision was essentially kicking the academic can down the road, for the same situation arose with the appointment of Brett McClain in 2022, at which time there was no further resolution on the policy of what academic rank, if any, was required for the position.

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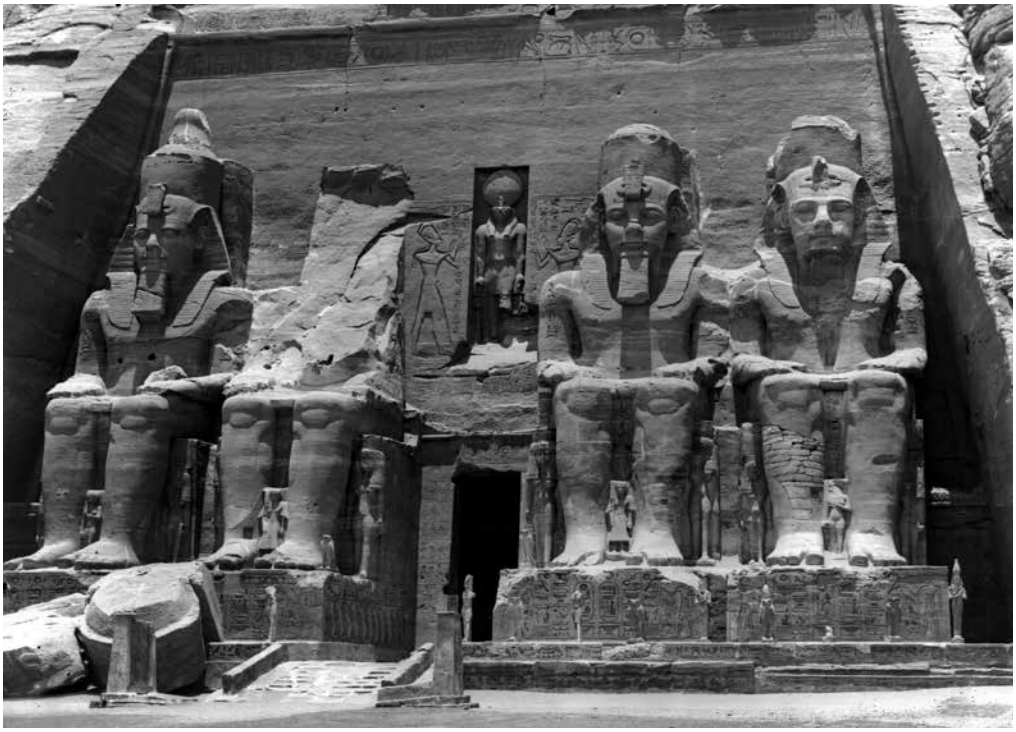

Figure 3.42. Temple of Abu Simbel, date and photographer unknown. From *Lost Egypt*, vol. 2, pl. 1.

scholarly articles that were prerequisites for advancement. Just as Carl Kraeling had warned Hughes in 1962, none of the Survey volumes counted toward Dorman's tenure.[281]

Publications under Dorman

The rate of publications increased under Dorman and alleviated the Chicago faculty's concern about the Survey's productivity. In more good news, Dorman secured full funding for two volumes of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple* (as well as subsequent ones) from the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust (see chapter 6, "Luxor Temple, 1937, 1975–"). Several other volumes appeared under Dorman, including *Medinet Habu—Volume IX: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part I: The Inner Sanctuaries* (OIP 136), published in 2009. The 142 plates were accompanied by a booklet that included a preface by Dorman with a discussion of the monument and its alterations under the Thutmosides and in later times. Harold Hayes contributed an essay on the ritual scenes, Jasnow and Di Cerbo provided translations of the Demotic graffiti, and Johnson wrote about the dyad of Thutmose III and Amun. A brief discussion of the granite naos was followed by full translations of the texts and a glossary. The publication was designed with online readers in mind, and a note was added about the best way to view the PDFs. The book was printed in 650 copies by the Chicago Press Corporation and retailed for $225.

The Registry of the Photographic Archives of the Epigraphic Survey (OIC 27, 1995) was also supported by the grant received in 1989 from the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. This catalog of the collection, with the photos linked to Nelson's *Key Plans* (see "Nelson's *Key Plans*" in chapter 5), was later transferred to a database.

Lost Egypt (1992) was intended for a very different audience. Designed to raise funds and awareness, it consisted of a series of three portfolios, each limited to 200 copies and containing ten photos of Egypt taken between 1880 and 1930 (fig. 3.42). The images came from a Luxor resident who approached

Chicago House in 1985 with an offer to sell his collection of 800 old glass-plate negatives of scenes in the Nile Valley. Buying them at the time was not financially possible, but in 1987, with the devaluation of the Egyptian pound, Chicago House was able to purchase the entire collection, still in their original wood crates. Over three years, Sue Lezon conserved the negatives and John Darnell identified the subject matter. Thirty photos were selected for the publication. Lezon, James Riley, and Cecile Keefe produced the prints on special photo paper in the Egyptian sun. Each portfolio was accompanied by a booklet with information about the history of photography in Egypt, a description of each image, and an essay on "Photography and the Early Documentation of Egyptian Monuments." The text is credited to Dorman, Darnell, and Lezon. The project was published with the assistance of the FOCH tour of November 1988, the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, and Carlotta Maher. The images were featured in several photo exhibitions in the United States.

The W. Raymond Johnson Years (1996-2021)

Under W. Raymond (Ray) Johnson, the Survey's long-term documentation programs were augmented by expanded physical conservation and restoration work on both sides of the river, made necessary by rapidly changing climatic and demographic conditions in Egypt. Work continued in the Luxor Temple blockyard and at the Small Temple at Medinet Habu, aided by the EAP grants awarded in 1995 and 1996, respectively (fig. 3.43). Work was also restarted at the tomb of Nefersekheru (TT 107) and resumed at the Khonsu Temple at Karnak.

Johnson's years as director were marked by an emphasis on conservation and restoration in an effort to help Egypt address the accelerating decay of the monuments in Luxor. Funding secured from ARCE, the World Monuments Fund, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supported the conservation (and documentation)

Figure 3.43. Artists Sue Osgood and Keli Alberts working in the Small Temple of Amun, 2023. Photo: S. Lezon.

projects. During his tenure, Johnson was able to help convince the US Embassy and USAID Egypt of the worthiness of groundwater mitigation projects throughout Egypt by conducting site tours, where he was able to point out the physical problems caused by increased agriculture, rising groundwater, and changing weather and population patterns. USAID-sponsored dewatering projects have now lowered the groundwater in Luxor as well as at other cultural-heritage sites throughout Egypt, arresting the salt decay and stabilizing the monuments that are at the core of Egypt's economy.

Work at Medinet Habu

Work continued in the Small Temple of Amun, facilitated in 1996 by what evolved into a ten-year EAP grant from USAID that allowed expansion of all aspects of the Survey's work there. In 2001, artists and epigraphers started work on the barque chapel and facade of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple. This part of the temple, with its complicated history of reuse over 2,000 years, was to occupy the Survey for the next fifteen years and is ongoing. Originally conceived as fitting into a single-volume publication, the Eighteenth Dynasty temple alone has a density of inscribed wall surfaces that necessitates publication in four volumes. The later additions to the temple will be published in two volumes, one

devoted to the Kushite Pylon and Court, the other to the Ptolemaic Pylon and the Roman Court.

Study of the formal texts and reliefs was joined by documentation of the graffiti in the Small Temple, initiated in 2002 by epigrapher/artist Di Cerbo (fig. 3.44). She started to compile a database of the textual and figurative graffiti in the entire precinct, following up on a project that had started in the 1930s but was never completed. She initially collected 1,450 examples, and in later years she, along with Egyptologist/epigrapher (and later consultant) Jasnow, focused on the graffiti in the Small Temple, documenting hundreds more examples representing 3,000 years of use of the structure. Each example was keyed to a plan of the temple showing its location; as the temple is published section by section, the graffiti in each part are included in the relevant volume. Di Cerbo and Jasnow were early adopters of digital technology that revealed many more nearly invisible graffiti that are quickly fading away because of increasing humidity. They moved on to document the graffiti in the Great Temple in 2008 and worked in the Kushite court and Ptolemaic annex in 2014.

Figure 3.44. Richard Jasnow and Tina Di Cerbo studying graffiti on the roof of the Great Temple at Medinet Habu, 2014. Photo: S. Lezon.

Conservation at Medinet Habu

In the 1998 season, the EAP grant allowed stonemason Dany Roy to continue the repair and replacement of sandstone roof blocks and floor slabs with matching stone quarried at Gebel Silsila. In the 1998 season, conservator Lotfi Hassan (fig. 3.45), who was to stay with the survey for many years, began cleaning the reliefs in the central Thutmoside chapel that had been discolored by rain, revealing more pigment and ink details that were added to the existing facsimile records. The work expanded to the side chapels, with Hassan being joined by Adel Aziz Andraus, Veronica Paglione, and Nahed Samir Andraus, cleaning and consolidating room by room.

Some of the work in the Small Temple included excavation—another departure from the modern activities of the Survey. In 1999, the central chapel was prepared for a new stone floor, and Di Cerbo supervised the recovery of six large and

Figure 3.45. Conservator Lotfi Hassan treating fragments from the Palace at Medinet Habu, 2010–11. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

hundreds of smaller granodiorite fragments of a colossal double statue of Thutmose III and Amun that had been found in the floor debris of the central chamber and then reburied by Uvo Hölscher in the 1928 season. The pieces were conserved by Hassan and reerected by Roy in the dyad chamber where the statue originally stood (fig. 3.46). There were more surprises: during the 2001 excavations of the sanctuary's floor by archaeologist Lisa Giddy, a granite offering table inscribed for the God's Wife Shepenwepet II was recovered from the foundation pit of the Ptolemaic naos in the westernmost chapel. In 2005, it was installed in its original location in the chapel of Shepenwepet to the south of the Small Temple (fig. 3.47). In 2004, the five-ton red-granite Ptolemaic naos was temporarily moved to the east side of the naos chamber, making the decoration on the back of the naos and on the wall of the chapel visible, and documentable, for the first time in 2,000 years. The naos was later returned to its original location (fig. 3.48).

In 2006, the local Gourna inspectorate of the Supreme Council of Antiquities requested that the Survey conserve the Southern Well of Ramesses III, which had been weakened by groundwater salt decay and was in danger of collapse. Years earlier, Tom Van Eynde and then Yarko Kobylecky had undertaken complete photographic documentation of the reliefs of the Nile gods bearing vessels of water up to the entrance of the well (fig. 3.49). In March 2006, Hassan and his team consolidated the crumbling blocks. Over the next few seasons, the superstructure of the well was dismantled to its foundations by stonemason Frank Helmholz and his Egyptian stone team, and the blocks were stored on adjacent damp-course mastabas (platforms) for consolidation as the USAID-funded dewatering project for the area began.

In 2006, the Supreme Council of Antiquities made another request—that the hundreds of blocks and sculpture fragments that had been stored in an old blockyard east of the Palace and just south of the chapels of the God's Wives be moved to a more secure area. The blocks included large architectural fragments from the Ramesses III temple, along with many that were from unknown sources but had been brought to the site over the years. In 2007, fourteen mastabas, each 16 meters long, were constructed against the north face of the southern enclosure wall, and a mudbrick wall was built to outline the new, partially roofed storage area. That year Julia Schmied, assisted by Christian Greco, began inventorying and registering the blocks in a database as the blocks and fragments were transferred to the new enclosure; by 2010, more than 3,500 pieces had been transferred. Although constructed as a secure magazine, mastabas were built against its exterior face for the display of large-scale architectural elements, including large window grilles and false-door enclosures from the temple (fig. 3.50). New lighting was installed for the blockyard facade.

In early 2011, after a study suggested an immediate intervention, work began on the Gate of Domitian, which was in threat of collapse because of weakened foundation blocks and lower courses that were badly eroded by high groundwater. The gate was photographed, each block was numbered and then dismantled, and the damaged stone was replaced by stonemason Helmholz, later assisted by Johannes Weninger. In 2016, the gate was reerected to the west of the Small Temple in the location where Georges Daressy had restored it, but completely stabilized on a new, damp-coursed and reinforced concrete foundation.

Nelson and Hölscher had planned to restore and prepare the back areas of Medinet Habu for visitors in the 1930s but were never able to see that project to completion, and the area had suffered erosion and decay in a series of mid-1990s rainstorms. In an attempt to address some of these long-term loose ends, the Survey's conservation efforts turned to the south and west sides of the Great Temple complex. Supported by USAID funding in 2015, work began on the documentation and conservation, stabilization, and site development of the

Figure 3.46. Monumental statue of Amun and Thutmose III as reconstructed in the Small Temple, 2000. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 3.47. Conservators Lotfi Hassan and Nahed Samir Andraus examining the offering table of the God's Wife Shepenwepet that was recovered from under the naos in the Small Temple of Amun, 2006. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

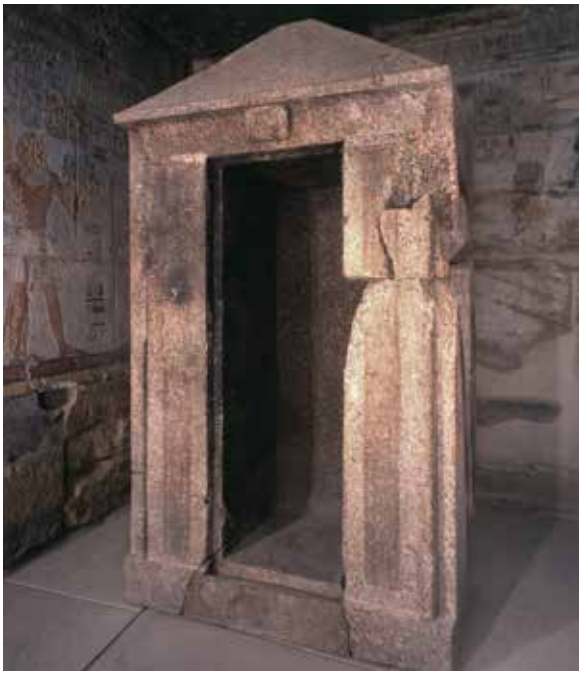

Figure 3.48. Granite naos in the Small Temple of Amun, 2007. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

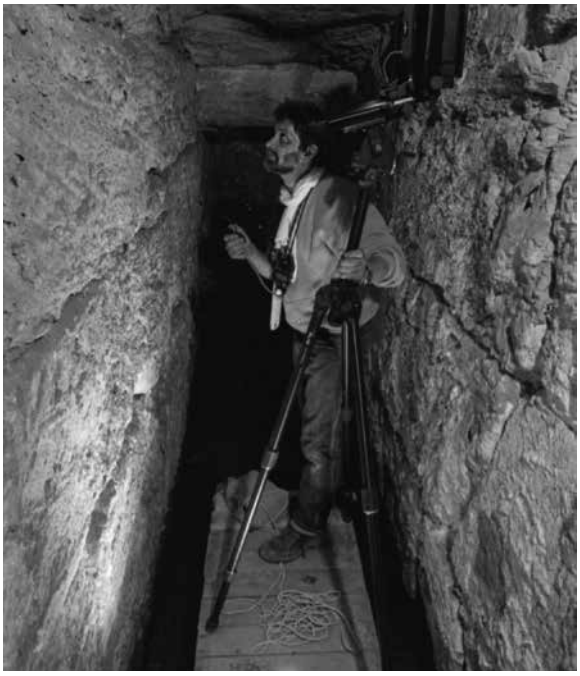

Figure 3.49. Yarko Kobylecky photographing in the decorated well of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, 1998. Photo: S. Lezon.

Figure 3.50. Storage facility for decorated blocks and architectural fragments, 2012. Fragments from the Palace are displayed on platforms in front. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

House of Butehamun in the southwest corner of the precinct (fig. 3.51). Butehamun was an official of the late Twentieth Dynasty (ca. 1069 BC) who was responsible for rewrapping and reburying the New Kingdom royal mummies. This project was supervised by conservator Hassan, while archaeological consultant Gregory Marouard examined the site to determine how much of the platform had been cleared by Hölscher before restoration work began.*

A larger and far more complicated element of the project was the study of the architecture of the Western High Gate (fig. 3.52). This enormous structure, a pendant to the well-preserved Eastern High Gate, was destroyed at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty. Hölscher had excavated and studied the area for the Oriental Institute in the 1930 season, but nothing more had been done on the enormous blocks that were strewn around the site. Starting in 2013, Jen Kimpton and Keli Alberts started an ongoing architectural and epigraphic study of the blocks and *comparanda* to create at least a virtual reconstruction of the gate (fig. 3.53), augmented by an open-air museum and the reassembly of some of the actual blocks.

Under the 2015 USAID grant for conservation and site management designed to promote tourism and the physical preservation of cultural-heritage sites, another ambitious project left unfinished in 1931 was undertaken to restore the ancient pavement around the temple and facilitate safe access to the exterior wall reliefs of Ramesses III. Wherever

* In 1938, Jaroslav Černy was sent photographs of the texts from the House of Butehamun, but nothing came of the proposed collaboration (Hughes, 4 February 1950, ISAC Museum Archives).

the original paving was preserved—even partially—it was retained by Helmholz, Weninger, and the Egyptian stone team, resulting in the creation of complexly shaped slabs of sandstone to replace the sections of destroyed paving (fig. 3.54). Hassan and the Egyptian conservators also built up and capped the tops of the ancient mudbrick walls with new mudbricks stamped "UC" with the vintage logo of the University of Chicago (fig. 3.55). The stone walkway bordered by the protective mudbrick walls on the south, west, and north sides of the temple was completed in 2022. The grant also funded a training program for Egyptian conservators, reviving a program begun earlier. It was extended in 2018.

In 2015, under a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, work began on conserving the Southern Well of Ramesses III, a project initiated in 2006 but put on hold until the groundwater subsided. The new phase of work was overseen by conservators Hassan and Samir and a team of Egyptian conservators trained by Chicago House. Two new projects were initiated in 2019: the documentation and conservation of the Taharka Gate and the Claudius Gate, both threatened with collapse due to groundwater salt decay, were funded by USAID. Under a grant from ARCE, the chapels of the God's Wives of Amun were photographed, and in 2016, Egyptologist Aleksandra Hallmann began a study of their reliefs, a program initially funded by an National Endowment for the Humanities–ARCE grant, then afterward by the National Science Centre of Poland based at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw).

Figure 3.51. Brett McClain copying texts in the House of Butehamun at Medinet Habu, 2014. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

Figure 3.52. Epigrapher Jen Kimpton atop the ruins of the Western High Gate, 2017. Photo: K. Alberts.

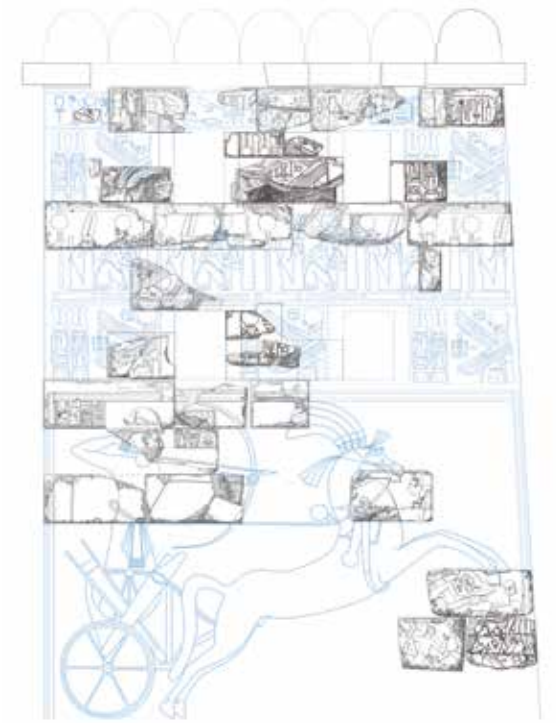

Figure 3.53. Reconstruction of the west wall of the south tower of the Western High Gate by Jen Kimpton and Keli Alberts, 2023. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

Figure 3.54. Restoration of the ancient paving around the Great Temple, February 2018. Intricately cut pieces were inserted to preserve as much of the original stone as possible. Photo: F. Helmholz.

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Figure 3.55. New mudbricks, stamped with "UC," used to cap and protect the ancient walls (left), April 2017. Photo: F. Helmholz.

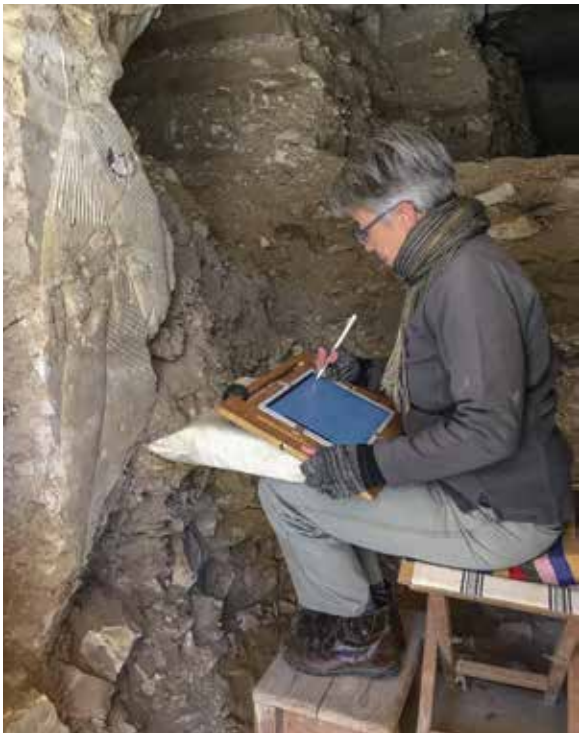

Figure 3.56. Artist Sue Osgood with a Wacom tablet, documenting reliefs in the tomb of Nefersekheru, 2007. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

The Tomb of Nefersekheru (TT 107)

Permission to document the tomb of Nefersekheru, the steward of Amenhotep III's jubilee palace at Malqata in western Thebes, had been granted in 1973. At the time, field director Weeks expressed an interest in it because of the relationship of the subject matter of the reliefs to that in the contemporary tomb of Kheruef. As one of the largest private tombs in Thebes dating to the later reign of Amenhotep III, Nefersekheru was of special interest to field director Johnson, who is an expert in the art of that era. The Survey returned to TT 107 in 2009, and a condition survey was done by structural engineer Conor Power. After the ceiling of the portico was secured with screw jacks (loaned by Weeks), Kobylecky and Smith began photography. Over most of the next eleven years, the Survey spent about a month each season working in the tomb. Osgood (fig. 3.56) and De Jong were the artists, and conservator Kariya consolidated the many fragments. In 2009, archaeologists Boyo Ockinga and Susanne Binder joined the team to clear debris ahead of documenting more of the plan of the tomb's portico and pillared broad hall, and they discovered additional, undecorated rooms extending beyond the hall.

Photography always played a central role in the work of the Survey, and with the advent of the digital age, enormous amounts of data were acquired. New photography included images of areas other than those of epigraphic interest. Photographers Kobylecky and Lezon documented much of downtown Luxor before the urban renewal program demolished a lot of the town's core (fig. 3.57), as well as the west bank when the historic town of Gourna was razed. The Survey continued to receive the archives of Egyptologists, including those of Labib Habachi, Henri Riad, Ted Brock, Helen Jacquet-Gordon, and Jean Jacquet.

Figure 3.57. The neo-pharaonic police station in downtown Luxor before it was demolished for the clearance of the Avenue of the Sphinxes, 2009. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

In 2006, Johnson added digital specialists Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudiès (fig. 3.58), formerly of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak, to the staff to create a Chicago House Digital Database. Systematically safeguarding the rapidly accumulating digital data—including photogrammetric images being produced for digital drawing enlargements, the digital drawings themselves, multiple digital photos, and even the digitized copies of more than 17,000 large-format photographs that were transferred in 2002 to the Oriental Institute archive in Chicago—became a top priority and remains so today.

External events continued to impact the work of the Survey, and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic created chaos. The season ended in March rather than in April when all archaeological sites were closed. The house was closed for the 2020 season—the first time since World War II—but Johnson kept the entire staff working remotely, catching up with drawing, inking, making digital models (especially of the Luxor blocks, the Western High Gate, and the two sanctuaries at Luxor Temple), processing other data, and finalizing articles for the online manual digitalEPIGRAPHY.

Funding under Johnson

As with previous field directors, much of Johnson's time was devoted to securing the financial stability of the Survey. He successfully obtained USAID grants. One, in 2005, provided three years of support for operations (one of the most difficult

Figure 3.58. Archivists Alain and Emmanuelle Arnaudiès with Mahmoud Abdellahi examining the Abdellahi family photo album, 2024. Photo: S. Lezon.

categories to fund) and was extended in 2007 for an additional seven years. In 2017, another four-year USAID grant was received for conservation and restoration work at Medinet Habu, including work on the Western High Gate. A further USAID grant was awarded in 2019 for the conservation work at Medinet Habu. The World Monuments Fund supported work on the Luxor block project in 2000 and again in 2003. Other grants included those in 2010 from the Sawaris family for the study of the blocks from the early church of Saint Thecla at Luxor Temple, in 2012 from the Women's Board of the University of Chicago to initiate digital epigraphy, in 2014 to operate a field school at Medinet Habu to train Egyptian conservators, and in 2015 from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation for documentation and conservation of the Southern Well of Ramesses III. Marjorie M. Fisher and the Fisher Foundation were consistent and generous supporters of the Survey's work, and in 2008 the Chicago House library was named in her honor (see fig. 12.42 in chapter 12). That same year, the photo archives were named in honor of Tom and Linda Heagy in thanks for their many efforts on behalf of Chicago House.

Staffing under Johnson

The core group of epigraphers under Johnson were Brett McClain, who started in 1998; Jen Kimpton (since 2002); and Tina Di Cerbo (since 2006, and an artist in earlier years) (fig. 3.59). John Darnell departed after the 1997 season for a faculty position at Yale, and Deborah Darnell stayed through the 1999 season. Edward (Ted) Castle served for the 1997–2000 seasons; Hratch Papazian in 1998 and 1999; Christian Greco from 2007 to 2011; Randy Shonkwiler from 2001 to 2003; Steven Shubert in 2001; Briant Bohleke for the 1999 and 2000 seasons; Harold Hays from 2000 through 2004; François Gaudard in 2005; and Aleksandra Hallmann in 2016 and 2019–23, to study the texts in the God's Wives chapels. Richard Jasnow served as a consulting Demotist for many seasons.

Johnson brought more student epigraphers to Luxor, including Vanessa Davies in 2005; Ginger Emery, who came as a student in the 2006 season and stayed as regular staff through the 2010 season; Jonathan Winnerman, who started as a student in 2016 and stayed on as regular staff for the next season; Ariel Singer in 2017–22; Rebecca Wang in 2022; and Catherine Witt in 2022–23.

The roster of artists was more consistent, with the stalwarts being Osgood, De Jong, Di Cerbo, and James (Jay) B. Heidel (as artist and architect), all of whom had also worked for Dorman. Carol Meyer, who had been with the Survey since 1985, left after the 1991 season to pursue her own archaeological work. Christian Greco served as an artist for the 2006 season, then as an epigrapher for the next five seasons. Carol Abraczinkas was in Luxor for the 1998 and 1999 seasons, Will Schenck for the 2000–2002 seasons, and Krisztián Vértes joined the Survey in 2005. With the addition of Keli Alberts in 2008, the staff of artists was consistently Osgood,

Figure 3.59. Staff photo, 1998 season. Top row: Brett McClain, Moataz Abo Shadi, Ted Castle, Bernice Williams, Exa Snow, Margaret De Jong. Second row: James Riley, Jean Jacquet, Hiroko Kariya, Tina Di Cerbo, Ahmed Harfoush, Nan Ray, Saleh Shehat, Carlotta Maher, Gerard, Henri Riad, Helen Jacquet, Carol Abraczinskas, Marlin Sarwat. Third row: Lotfi Hassan, Debbie Darnell, Hratch Papazian, Dany Roy, Ellie Smith, Yarko Kobylecky. Bottom: Sue Lezon (with Nikon), Ray Johnson, Sue Osgood. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

De Jong, Vertés, and Alberts. In 2016, Dominique Navarro joined the art staff, making it an astounding five artists through the 2021 season. That number was only exceeded by the six artists on staff under Nelson in the 1931, 1932, and 1934 seasons. In 2009, Jay Heidel returned to the Survey as architect.

In 2022, Ray Johnson retired. He had devoted forty-two years to Chicago House in the roles of artist, senior artist, and, since 1997, field director. Shortly after he retired, in 2024, *Medinet Habu—Volume X: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part II: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmosid Peripteros* appeared as the first volume in the new ISAC Publications series.* The 109 boxed plates are accompanied by a booklet with a foreword by Johnson, a five-page introduction to the facade and peripteros, and translations that "represent the collective effort" of many epigraphers who worked on the material over the years, edited by Brett McClain and Jen Kimpton. Krisztián Vértes contributed a section on the "History of the Painted Decoration of the Peripteros and Façade," and Di Cerbo

* In 2023, the Oriental Institute changed its name to Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures—West Asia & North Africa.

and Richard Jasnow provided translations of the Demotic graffiti. The booklet concludes with a glossary. The drawings are the work of many artists who labored on the project over the years; Sue Lezon checked the photographic plates, and Ariel Singer is credited with typesetting and correcting the manuscript. *Medinet Habu* X was printed by M&G Graphics in Chicago. As with all Oriental Institute/ISAC publications, it was made available as a free PDF download, ensuring that scholars and the interested public throughout the world would have access to it.

J. Brett McClain, 2022–

Johnson was succeeded by senior epigrapher and assistant director J. Brett McClain (fig. 3.60), who had been with the Survey since 1998 and who will see it, and Chicago House, further into the twenty-first century. He envisions work at Medinet Habu as continuing for another generation, if not beyond.

Figure 3.60. J. Brett McClain, field director since 2022, in the Small Temple at Medinet Habu, 2024. Photo: S. Lezon.

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4 Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926–1936

James Henry Breasted's interests were rooted in history and texts, and initially he did not include excavation as a priority for the University of Chicago, declaring to John D. Rockefeller Jr. in his February 1919 proposal for the new institute, "The Oriental Institute is not an Excavation organization. . . . While the Oriental Institute might accomplish much in suggesting and encouraging excavation, its plan does not contemplate supporting from its own budget any costly excavation campaigns."[1] Early in his career, his emphasis was entirely on the collation of historical records from which to write accurate history. As his son recalled,

> My father now entered upon another period of scientific drudgery as a self-appointed task the importance of which, he knew, would be recognized by scarcely a dozen men in the entire scientific world. As for the general public, the meticulous recording of long-known, steadily perishing, and largely unpublished historical monuments *above* ground had about it almost none of the excitement and fascination popularly associated with digging for *buried* ancient treasure. But he was more than ever convinced that however much the excavations of men like Petrie, Davis, Quibell and others might contribute to Egyptology, he himself could render it no greater service than to copy while they were still legible the historical records on the ancient monuments of Egypt.[2]

However, as he further formulated the mission of the Oriental Institute, especially as a result of a 1919–20 reconnaissance trip through the Near East, Breasted recognized and emphasized the importance of excavation. In his report to University president Henry Pratt Judson (ca. 1920), the section "Opportunities for Excavation and Research" stated, "The most practical and tangible line of initial development would be a series of excavating expeditions at the most promising accessible sites."[3] At this time, Breasted recommended Memphis as the focus for work in Egypt, largely because of his visit to Clarence Fisher of the University of Pennsylvania, who led that institution's expedition to Memphis (1915–23).

Henry Leichter photographing the excavation northeast of the Small Temple of Amun with a large-format camera, 1929. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Breasted wrote to Harold Nelson: "Eventually I hope we can organize an architectural survey of Egypt. It is one of the most needed projects on the Nile. With the exception of [Ludwig] Borchardt's restoration of the Old Kingdom pyramid temples, there is not a single adequate or even usable survey of any single temple in Egypt. Such a survey would make an invaluable series of volumes and I have had it in mind for years. I mentioned the matter one day last winter to Fisher and he told me he was very glad to see that I was taking up his plan!"[4]

The Establishment of the Architectural Survey

Breasted's new interest in and acknowledgment of the importance of archaeology being used in conjunction with epigraphy to thoroughly document the temple of Medinet Habu resulted in the expansion of the work at Luxor. In October 1925, he wrote to Nelson, "I have from the beginning had the feeling, as I know you have, that our work on the temple is very one-sided. There ought to be a good architectural record of it made and I would like very much to attach an architect to our work in Egypt."[5] In hindsight, he recalled, in his 1933 survey of the Oriental Institute, "Since it had meantime become quite obvious that no adequate account of this temple could be confined to a reproduction of its reliefs and inscriptions, a new section of the Epigraphic Expedition was organized, an Architectural Survey headed by Professor Uvo Hölscher, of Hanover, with a single assistant."[6] The result of combining the two disciplines led to Medinet Habu's being one of the most thoroughly documented temples in the Nile Valley.

Uvo Hölscher (1878–1963) (fig. 4.1) was in many ways the ideal person for the task. He was an architect who worked with archaeological teams. In 1907 and 1908, he worked with Ludwig Borchardt at Abusir, drawing exquisitely detailed architectural plans and also producing beautiful watercolors of objects and views of the site.* Hölscher went on to work with Hermann Junker at Giza, studying the causeway area of Khafra, and in 1910 he went to Amarna to design and build the German dig house.[7]

Figure 4.1. Uvo Hölscher, director of the Architectural Survey, with his wife, Ottilie, ca. 1929. Photo: J. A. Chubb, Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Hölscher had a long-standing interest in Medinet Habu. In 1909, he was awarded his doctor of engineering science degree based on his study of the temple's Eastern High Gate, *Das hohe Tor von Medinet Habu*.[8] This work was acclaimed as a groundbreaking study of architectural history: "It especially set new standards by showing architectural historians that even quite inconspicuous traces on a wall can provide fundamental insights into the

* See C. Loeben, "Uvo Hölscher in Abusir," in *Sahure: Tod und Leben eines grossen Pharao*, edited by V. Brinkmann (Frankfurt: Hirmer, 2010), 143–51. Breasted used Hölscher's watercolor of a vessel from Neferirkare as the frontispiece for the first edition of his *Ancient Times: A History of the Ancient World* (New York: Ginn and Company, 1914). There, oddly, it is credited "after Borchardt," without mentioning the name of the artist.

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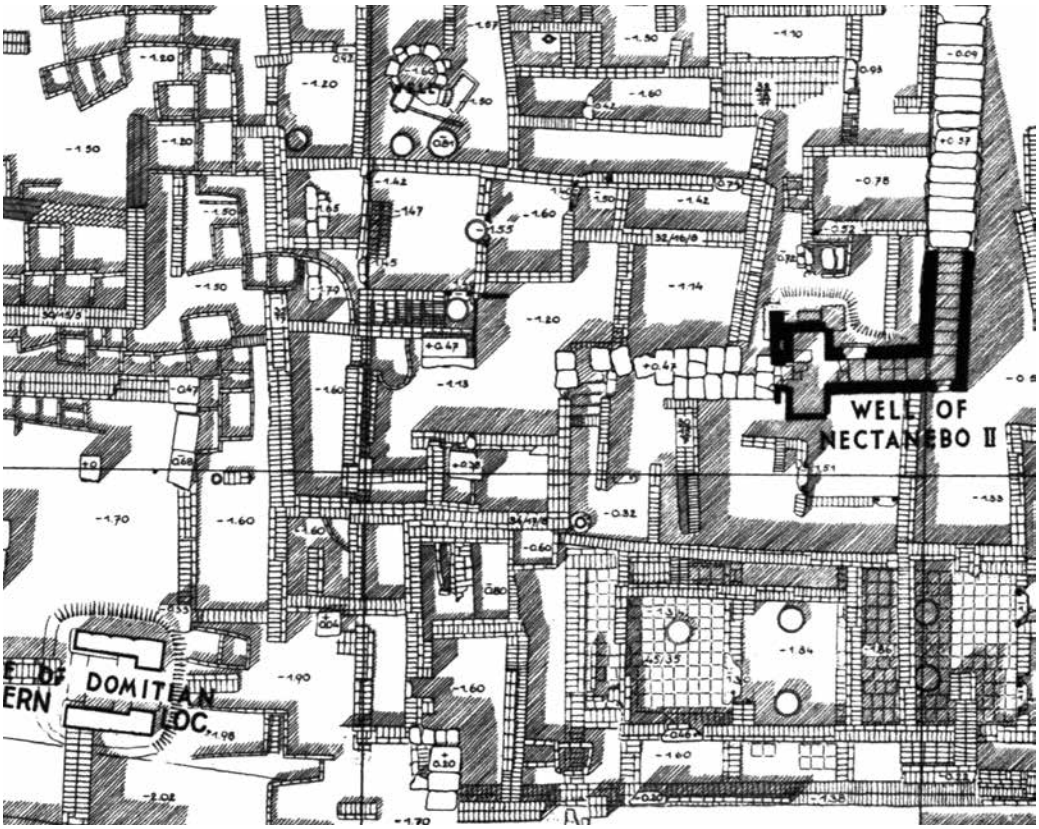

Figure 4.2. Detail from *Excavation* I, pl. 5, showing individual mudbricks.

former appearance of a building."[9] Hölscher's sentiments meshed with Breasted's. The architect wrote:

> The main purpose of a systematic excavation is not to bring treasures or "discoveries" to light—as desirable as that may be per se!—but to make the relics of the cultural and artistic activity of long-departed peoples live again, i.e., the witnesses to their physical and intellectual life. The significance accorded to the products of the human hand as an expression of the human intellect becomes all the greater the less we know about the intellectual life of peoples of the distant past based on literary documents. Crafts and fine art, but above all architecture, as the loftiest human creative activity, speak a living language; they tell us how people once dwelt and lived, how they worshipped their gods and buried their dead. Their rise and fall reveals the ascent of new races and the demise of decadent peoples. The economic and cultural flowering and the impoverishment of peoples are reflected in the structures and their accouterments; natural disasters, wars and migrations of peoples have left their unmistakable traces in the edifices. Architecture is history turned to stone. *Saxa loquunter*! [The stones speak!][10]

Hölscher's work was impeccable, later being described as "a campaign that was conducted on a far more intensive and thorough manner than anything known in Egyptian archaeology before; completely new standards were set in the recording of this great building and superlative plans with an immense amount of detail were drawn for the monumental publication."[11] The drawings of structures at the site had amazing detail. A drawing of a mudbrick wall, for instance, represented each individual brick (fig. 4.2).

The Work at Medinet Habu

The Egyptian Antiquities Service was excavating Medinet Habu in spring 1925, clearing an area in the south of the precinct, west of the Palace, while the Chicago epigraphers began work recording the reliefs and texts on the south side of the Great Temple adjacent to the excavations. Nelson expressed his annoyance at the dust the work created because it interfered with work of the epigraphers.[12] Even several years later, he made his feelings quite clear to Breasted:

> I very much regret that we have to excavate at all, but I believe that under the circumstances it is the best thing to do. I shall be greatly relieved when the work is completed. I am not particularly anxious to make finds of objects at the temple, though naturally would be greatly pleased should we turn up inscriptions or papyri that threw further light on the period in which we are working. I do not believe that other objects found would greatly increase our knowledge and they might arouse friction with the Department of Antiquities which we so much wish to avoid.[13]

In 1926, Breasted applied for permission for Chicago to conduct its own excavations. The Chicago team recognized that there was vagueness in its concession request, specifically in how much of the site of Medinet Habu was included, because Breasted thought the Egyptians wanted to work on some of the structures outside the Great Temple. He wrote to Hölscher:

> This raises the question of a Permit for the excavations around the Temple inside of the Enclosure wall. The Service des Antiquités began the clearance of this enclosure last winter, but did not carry it very far. I think that M. Lacau* desires to reserve this piece of work for the Service, if so, it is possible that we could make some arrangement with him by means of which you could make your study of the ground plan and superstructure still *in situ* as fast as the Service completes the clearance. . . . If it proves to be impossible to include the Temple Enclosure (Temenos) in our survey we should then have to confine our work to the architecture of the stone building itself.[14]

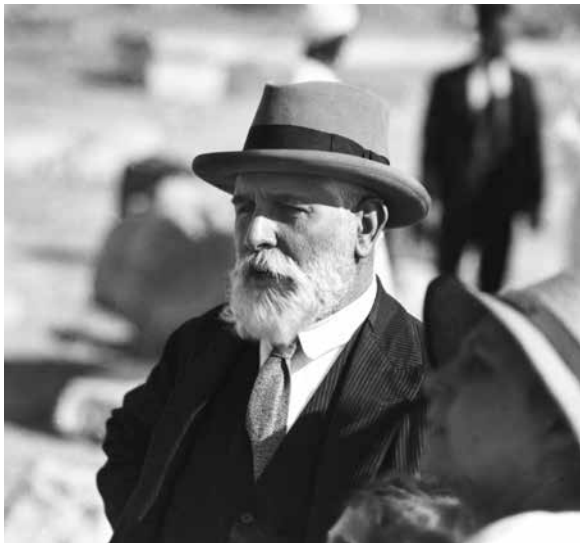

Figure 4.3. Pierre Lacau, director of the Service des Antiquités, ca. 1929. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

In 1926, Breasted continued talks with Pierre Lacau (fig. 4.3) about the extent of the University of Chicago's concession. Because it was uncertain whether they would be allowed to work in the entire complex rather than just the Great Temple, 1926 was referred to as a "survey and planning season" because a permit to excavate had not yet been issued.†

With the authorization for "survey" work in hand, Hölscher "cleared" the crypts in the Great Temple discovered earlier by Georges Daressy, making a number of discoveries that potentially created issues with the Antiquities Service.[15] Nelson reported to Breasted:

* Director of the Service des Antiquités; see fig. 4.3.

† The dates of the Architectural Survey vary from source to source depending on whether they are calculated by the excavation seasons only (1927–32) or include the 1926 season of "clearance," as well as the study seasons through 1936.

> When Hölscher was clearing one of the crypts in the back of the temple, in order to determine the size and relation of the crypt to the walls of the building, he came across the remains of a burial scattered among the loose earth with which the crypt was filled.* These remains consisted of broken fragments of an inlaid coffin, a few mummy beads, and a few broken ushabtis.† Apparently the earth of the crypt had been removed and then returned with the fragments mixed with it. However, on going a little deeper he found a pile of ushabtis lying *in situ*, undisturbed, piled up like cord wood. At once he sent me word and when I reached the temple, I stopped all work and sent a report across to the Inspector. The Inspector and his sub-inspector came over this morning, and, on seeing the find, told us to proceed with the clearing of the crypt but not to open any of the others till he had communicated with Cairo. The ushabtis, he said, should be sent to Cairo. . . . Our permit to investigate the architecture of the temple says nothing of antiquities and I therefore see nothing to do but to send the stuff to Cairo, as the Inspector said. . . . I shall photograph them tomorrow before they are touched, count them and make a careful record. . . . In some ways it is unfortunate that we found them, for Lacau may make us stop work, at least work of that kind. And the architecture cannot be recorded till the crypts are opened. There are several others of which we know in the temple and which we want to open. The Inspector said that he felt it would be best for us to open all the crypts and do the job up now once [and] for all, but he did not have authority to allow us to proceed without finding out whether our permit, which does not specify the crypts specifically, covered what we are doing.[16]

In December 1926, Chicago received "official authorization to clear the drifted sand within the temple and to make soundings outside at the various points." Nelson reported, "The question of excavation has not yet arisen, so that our position on the subject of antiquities is in no way prejudiced. As I stated before, I shall not do anything to commit us to any position on that question."[17] But in late February, Breasted reported that Lacau had agreed to include the enclosure wall; hence, all the structures within the Great Girdle Wall would be within the Chicago concession.[18] He wrote to Lacau:

> Referring to our conference at the temple of Medinet Habu on Saturday, February 5th, I would recall the fact that our architectural survey of the Medinet Habu temple and palace has now proceeded as far as it is possible to go without clearing away the rubbish which now covers almost the entire enclosure within the temenos wall. As you have kindly recognized it will be impossible for us to complete our architectural survey on this building without making a clearance of the entire temple enclosure, in order to expose the ground plan and as much of the elevations of the building as may be preserved under the rubbish. In order to make our architectural survey and our publication of the architecture of the Medinet Habu building I would hereby officially apply in the name of the University of Chicago for a permit or concession to clear away the rubbish now surrounding the large temple of Ramses III. The territory included in this concession would be as follows: the entire area surrounding the temple and now enclosed by the temenos wall; also a small clearance especially on the north-east side of the temenos wall but on the outside of this wall for the purpose of recovering the plan of the towers which once fortified the gateway; and finally such small soundings and clearances directly adjacent, though outside, the temenos wall as will enable us to recover the exact lines and plan of the exterior of this wall.[19]

In a letter to Adolph Erman in May 1927, Breasted forecast that the excavations would last two seasons.[20]

* This is Tomb 21; see *Excavation* V, 32.

† Statuettes placed in a tomb to serve the deceased in the afterlife.

The Beginning of the Official Excavations, 1927

Excavations formally commenced in the 1927 season as the concession was finalized with the Antiquities Service. In mid-July 1927, Nelson advised Breasted that Lacau had approved the request to excavate at Medinet Habu, but official approval from the Department of Public Works was not received until October 17.* The document stated that excavations could not commence until December 1, but Hölscher went to the museum in Cairo and managed to receive permission to start immediately.[21] Breasted, writing from Chicago, instructed "work . . . to go ahead in the territory immediately south (south-west) of the area excavated by Henry Burton"† (that is, south and southwest of the Great Temple). Even Nelson, who was not normally enthusiastic about excavation or the establishment of the Architectural Survey, wrote to Breasted, "I am beginning to get a little excited about the dig myself. It will be interesting work."

In mid-November, soon after Hölscher began, Nelson reported to Breasted, "The dig at the temple has been going on for nearly two weeks. Hoelscher has erected a barracks for the Kuftis,‡ behind the temple, on the *gebel* [hill/mountain] outside the walls, and a field house/office for himself on the debris within the temple area.§ He has also built up the runway for the railway which the Antiquities Department used two years ago and is today laying the rails."¶

Hölscher referred to his "system" of organization of the excavation, which was probably inherited from his years working with Borchardt at Abusir and a brief season with Junker at Giza. The excavation season usually ran from October to the end of March. In the summer, the expedition staff prepared drawings and texts for eventual publication.[22] The *reis*,** Qufti Hamid Ahmed Hamid, had been seconded from the University of Chicago's Megiddo Expedition. The rest of the workers were initially divided into three (and by late November, four) groups called *Fenge* that were deployed at different areas in the temple. Each *Fenge* had two leaders, a *sanâk* and a *reis* of the *kubaniya* (the latter made up of a maximum of thirty less-skilled workers).[23] In the 1927 season, the first *Fenge* was headed by Ali Ahmed Hamit as *sanâk* and Mahmud abd el Gelil as *reis* of the *kubaniya*; the second by Mehmoud abd el Gebil as *sanâk* and Soliman Achmet Mehmud as *reis*; and the third by Ibrahim Salim as *sanâk* and Taher Ahmed Hassan as *reis*. The fourth had Bedis(?) Ahmed as *sanâk* and Azab as *reis*.[24] By the end of November 1927, each *kubaniya* had ten "boys."[25] The end of December saw twenty-eight

* Hölscher says October 18 in OIC 5 (1929), 38.

† Breasted to Hölscher, 7 October 1927, ISAC Museum Archives. The letter reported: "With regard to the date when work may begin you will note that it is December 1st but you will recall that we had Lacau's oral permission, which I believe he afterward confirmed in writing." This is one of several times that the University of Chicago did not adhere to Lacau's instructions. The first season worked to the south and west of the Great Temple. "Henry" Burton is an error for Harry Burton, who excavated at the site in 1912 on behalf of Theodore Davis.

‡ Kuftis, more commonly spelled *Quftis* or *Guftis*, are men from the town of Quft (Coptos) north of Luxor who were trained in archaeological method by W. Flinders Petrie and J. E. Quibell. Descendants of the original corps of Quftis are still a specialized workforce who take a supervisory role in excavations.

§ The field house, about which more is said later, was located on top of the ruins of the Western High Gate. See *Tb.* 1, 2, and Nelson to Director-General, 11 October 1927, Marks Collection. It was not removed until February 1932, when that area was excavated and the ruins of the gate were exposed. See Hölscher in OIC 18, 91; Nelson to Breasted, 10 November 1927, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1583. For the location of the barracks, see Nelson to Director-General, 11 October 1927, Marks Collection.

¶ There is contradictory information about the light railway. According to a letter from Breasted to Hölscher (7 April 1927, CHP 857), Nelson was to order it from the firm of Orenstein & Koppell. Another letter (10 November 1927, ISAC Museum Archives) refers to "the railway which the Antiquities Department used two years ago."

** Arabic for "chief" (of the workers).

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Figure 4.4. Excavation in progress, with railway used to remove debris, ca. 1929. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

more men added to a fourth *Fenge*, which was assigned to level the railway and the passage through the south wall so that the excavation debris could be dumped outside the temenos. Mehmoud Hagi was in charge of the railway, with five men and five boys assigned to him.[26] There were also ten "specialists for fine work." Awadalla, Soliman, and Mohamed Yussuf, Quftis from Megiddo, are mentioned, but their positions are unstated.[27] By November, there were thirty-one Quftis including *reis* Mehmoud Meyir(?), who had worked with Hölscher the previous season.[28]

Hiring the local, less specialized labor was a problem. Initially twenty men (and presumably boys) were hired from the neighboring villages, but that number grew to 200 men, comprising "pick men, who did the actual excavating; boys, who carried the rubbish-filled baskets to the Decauville railway [fig. 4.4]; and youths, who pushed the dump cars."[29] In November, there was such a press of local laborers clamoring for the jobs that the local *omdas* (village leaders) were summoned to keep order.[30] Another house for the Quftis was built to the west of the temple enclosure, and there are references to a house of the *reis*.[31]

Breasted's initial concept was for the excavation staff to consist of Hölscher and a single assistant, but by the end of the first season, it was clear that Hölscher needed more "scientific staff" (a euphemism for Western scholars). In 1927, he was assisted by Hans Steckeweh, an architect from Hanover, who most recently had worked at Samos[32] and who was to work with Hölscher through the 1931 season. Edward DeLoach, who had been serving as the assistant field director of the Megiddo Expedition, worked for the 1927 season before returning to

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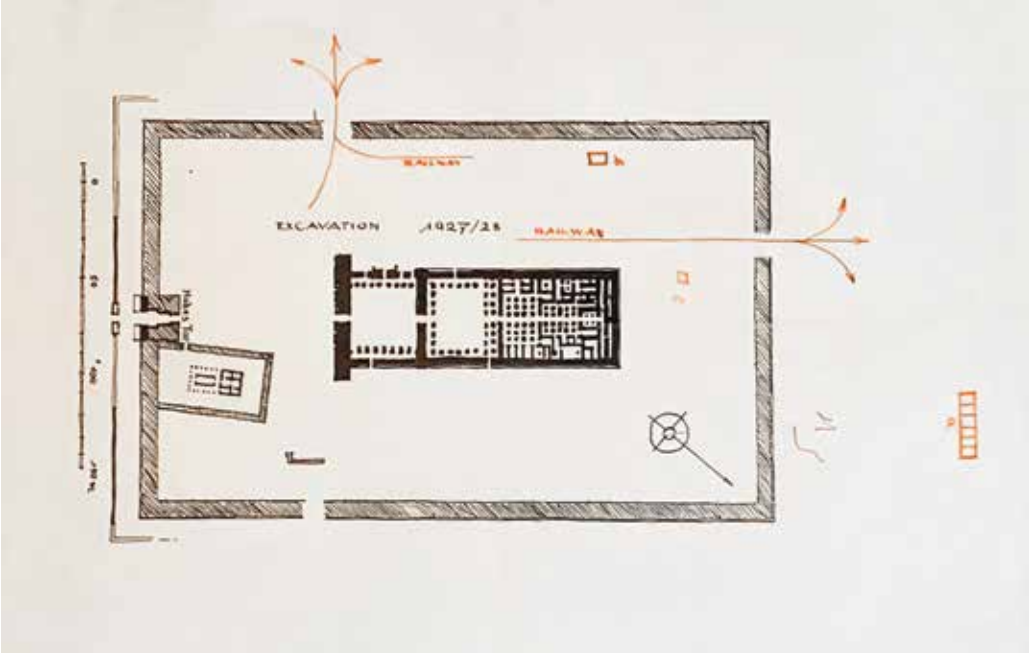

Figure 4.5. Plan of Medinet Habu with the position of the excavation railways and their exits from the temple area, 1927. Image: Collection of A. Marks.

Palestine.[33] Olaf Lind and Arthur Q. Morrison were photographers,* and H. Bayfield Clark was "temporarily" the surveyor.[34]

In this first "official" season, which lasted until April 1928, the team worked in the areas to the south and southwest of the Great Temple, leading to Hölscher's study of the different phases of the Palace. In November, the excavation railway was laid on "dykes" from previous excavations, one ridge running from the southwest side of the temple, at about the area of the Hypostyle Hall, directly south, and another that intersected it running west over the outer enclosure wall (fig. 4.5). The excavation dumps were "outside the Ramses area, up to a distance of 120 m in part," in an area that Hölscher had already investigated.[35]

The use of workmen from the Megiddo Expedition created problems because the excavations had different pay scales. Medinet Habu paid less than two-thirds of the Megiddo rate, the *reis* in Luxor receiving PT† 22 daily, the *sanâk* PT 11, the workmen PT 7–9, and unspecified "special cases" PT 11.‡ The men were paid weekly, and they received a bonus for Christmas and at the end of the season.§ The excavation sponsored a "great festival" in celebration of Ramadan with music and dancing, followed by a rest day.[36]

Three watchmen were kept on at the temple through the period when the excavation was not in the field. For summer 1928, they were Ali Achmed Hami, Moh. Achmed el Janussi from Keman near Quft, and Moh. Ali Chalifa from Baigat.¶ They were paid PT 270 per month, plus

* On Morrison's life in Luxor, see "Life at the Old Chicago House" in chapter 11.

† PT = Egyptian piaster, one one-hundredth of an Egyptian pound.

‡ The rate paid at Medinet Habu was the same as what Herbert Winlock of the Metropolitan Museum paid his workmen (*Tb.* 1, 22).

§ On 25 December 1928 (*Tb.* 2, 85), the Christmas bonus was PT 100 for the *reis*, PT 50 for the men, and PT 25 for the "boys."

¶ Names spelled as in Hölscher's excavation diary.

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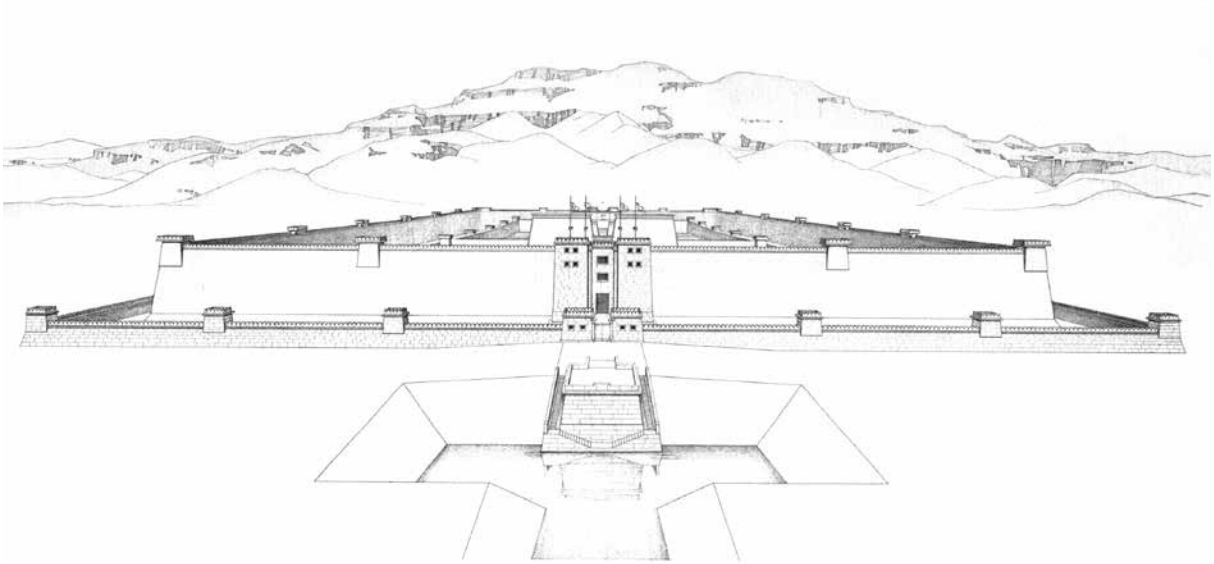

Figure 4.6. Reconstruction of Medinet Habu by Harald Hanson, published in *Excavation* IV, pl. 2.

PT 30 for the transportation of food from Quft, and they were given a stipend for the delivery of water. PT 10 was allotted for food for the "excavation dog" named Meier.[37]

Hölscher talked with locals who knew the area well. In late November 1927, he noted that "Old Musa from Gourna who already told me 8 days ago that he knew of a superb statue in granite inside the Birbe* of Med. Habu, came back today and showed me secretively the location southeast of the temple of the 18th Dynasty." This artifact was the head of a statue of Thutmose III that stood "somewhere" in the Small Temple.†

The 1928 Season

The second season lasted from October 1928 to the middle of March 1929. Steckeweh was joined by another German architect, Harald Hanson, who drew some of the reconstructions of the temple (fig. 4.6).[38] Luxor-based photographer Henry Leichter (fig. 4.7) served throughout the rest of the excavation but worked only two or three days a week.

Reis Hamid Ahmed Hamid and seven of the foremen were not able to return to Egypt, being needed for the Megiddo Expedition. Hölscher searched for a new *reis*, contacting Junker, then working at Giza, who recommended Scharid Mohammed Mansur, "rather young for such an undertaking" but whom Junker judged to be "reliable and very energetic."[39] Hölscher realized that putting such a young man over much older workers could "lead to all sorts of friction," so he temporarily "borrowed" Sadiq, an older *reis* from Junker's expedition at Giza, to "get things going" until November 15, before introducing the younger man as head *reis*. Scharid arrived from Cairo on October 21, and Sadiq arrived three days later after he found a short-term replacement for himself at Giza. The next day, Sadiq went to Quft to hire "about" another fifty skilled workers. That season, the men were divided into five *Fenge*, in all totaling about 200 men and boys.[40] Work began on October 30. Scharid worked out well and served as the head *reis* for the rest of the seasons at Medinet Habu.

Work at the temple was facilitated by the expansion of the "small excavation house," to which were added a veranda and another small room. Another "shed" was built to store the pottery.[41] There were

* Also referred to as the "tank."

† Cairo Museum JdE 59880; see *Excavation* II, 10, fig. 9; *Tb.* 1, 5.

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Figure 4.7. Harald Hanson, Henry Leichter, and assistant preparing to photograph finds from Medinet Habu, December 1929. A large canopic stopper (ISACM E14676) is in front of the camera. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

labor problems: "about 30 or 40 of the boys [were] missing" the day after Christmas, having gone over to the French excavations starting that day. Rather than appealing to the French, Hölscher simply replaced them.[42]

In the 1928 season, Hölscher worked at the Palace, the Eastern High Gate, the Small Temple of Amun, the southwest corner of the inner enclosure wall, the southwest corner of the Great Girdle Wall, and the chapels of the God's Wives (see plan 1). The tomb of Harsiese (a minor Theban ruler contemporary with the Twenty-Second Dynasty of Tanis) was discovered on January 7, 1929 (fig. 4.8).

Nelson expressed concern about antiquities leaking from the excavation. In March and April, he wrote to Breasted about a papyrus he and William Edgerton (of the Epigraphic Survey) had seen in Cairo. In April, he was offered a different papyrus "of Ramesside date" by a Luxor dealer, and Breasted mused, "It is therefore quite possible that they came from our excavations at Medinet Habu."[43] Breasted seemed to blame Hölscher's crew, writing to Nelson that he thought the excavations were progressing too fast and with too many workers, making it impossible for Hölscher and his staff to supervise properly.* Breasted, who (like Nelson) had never supervised an excavation,† was also concerned that

* This same issue of supervision came up again in early 1930 regarding the excavations' *reis* and his treatment of the workers, which Nelson thought to be too harsh (see discussion of the MacKnight inquiry in "Anti-German Sentiments" later in this chapter). Nelson suggested to Breasted that the problem was Hölscher's lack of supervision of the excavation: "There is little real close supervision of the men in the progress of their work. At times, Hoelscher or Steckeweh are present, but are generally engaged in surveying or in studying some special problem. The excavation is going on over a large area which cannot be closely watched" (13 February 1930, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1070).

† Breasted's prior experience with excavation was his weeklong visit to Flinders Petrie at Nagada in 1894, during which he

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Figure 4.8. Lifting the granite sarcophagus from the tomb of Harsiese, 1929. Left to right: Breasted, Nelson, Hölscher. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

Hölscher had proposed increasing the number of the workmen the next season. He wrote to Hölscher on April 1, 1928:

> The only course we can follow is to use a relatively small number of workmen, to divide them into small gangs and to put in as large a number as possible of our trusted Guftis among these gangs. The proposed policy of beginning January 1st with double the number of workmen is therefore impossible. None of us in our organization has ever carried on any excavations at Luxor before and I fear we have not realized that the dealers are constantly present ready to hand out money to our laborers for anything in the way of antiquities which may turn up in the excavations. Losses incurred in this way are evidently common and more so at Luxor than anywhere else, and I propose that our organization next winter shall meet this situation with the utmost care. I hope . . . to receive from you an assurance of your full concurrence and readiness to cooperate with us in the avoidance of any such accidents in the future."[44]

In late November, Nelson sent an urgent cable to Breasted reporting that the pillars and door jambs of the Palace were collapsing because their bases were being undermined by the wind. He wrote that he heartily disapproved of restoring

was able to observe Petrie's technique. In a letter to his family (3 December 1894, ISAC Museum Archives) he wrote, "I learned a great deal during this one short call as to expenses in excavation, personal expenses and so forth."

the architecture, but "here there is nothing of the ancient building that will be left above ground when the excavation has been filled in, and any visitor to the site will see nothing but the rather meaningless stone door jambs and the bases of the throne with the walls of the baths." Capping the walls in modern brick to a height of about 80 centimeters "so as to give an idea of the arrangement of the rooms would deceive no one and would be very illuminating."[45] They carried out the plan, although other members of the expedition later criticized it.

The 1929 Season

The third season focused on the north side of the Great Temple, clearing the ruins of the Coptic town of Djeme and "the offices and storerooms" of the temple.[46] The restoration of the Palace was finished. Despite Breasted's concerns, Hölscher employed between 250 and 300 workmen this season, about a quarter of the number "being skilled workers from Quft."[47] Steckeweh continued, but draftsman Harald Hanson left in the second half of the season and Siegfried Heise took his place for the remainder. Jack Bolles from Chicago's Anatolian expedition also was sent to Luxor. Gordon Loud of the Khorsabad expedition "tarried . . . some weeks on his way to Mesopotamia." All are listed as official staff. Hölscher's wife, Ottilie, was occupied "arranging the finds, cataloguing, and the like." Although her contribution is credited in the preliminary report,[48] she does not appear on the staff list in the final publication.[49]

The season saw other team members dispatched to Luxor by Breasted without consultation with Hölscher. One was Robert Lamon, a University of Chicago geology student and football player who came recommended by Charles Breasted as "on the slim side, good looking, and comes from a good family."[50] In fall 1928 he was sent to work at Megiddo, where he was a surveyor and draftsman, and thence to Luxor. He is not acknowledged in the staff list in *Excavation* I. Another was Leonard LeGrande (Ting) Hunter, an architecture student from the University of Pennsylvania, whom, as it turned out, Charles Breasted sent to Luxor mainly to work on the plans for the new Chicago House (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–"). Like Lamon, he is not on the published staff list. Scharid Mohammed Mansur again served as head *reis*.

The 1930 Season

In the 1930 season, Hölscher and his team excavated to the west of the Great Temple; to the east of the outer wall, where they found a Roman–Coptic settlement and a Coptic church; and at the Palace, finding its foundation deposits. They also made "test excavations" north of the Great Girdle Wall.[51] In January and February 1931, a portion of the team worked at the Ramesseum.[52]

Steckeweh had "direct oversight of the excavation work," Heise studied and drew the Coptic and later buildings, and Laurence Woolman, a University of Pennsylvania architecture student who was at Megiddo in the fall 1929 and spring 1930 seasons, came to Luxor for the 1930 season as a draftsman, where he "handled the individual problems of the Fortified Gate." He produced handsome elevations and plans of the High Gate. Leichter continued as the photographer, Rudolf Anthes studied the small finds, and Diederika Seele was registrar.[53] Neither Anthes nor Seele appear in the staff list in *Excavation* I.

Scharid Mohammed Mansur once again served as head *reis*. There were 67 (unnamed) Quftis and 209 men and boys, for a total workforce of 276.[54]

From January 20 to February 28, 1931, the work was again extended to the Ramesseum, where Steckeweh worked with forty men and eighty boys. They examined the Palace, the temple magazines, and the "adjoining structures . . . to answer as well as possible certain questions which had arisen at Medinet Habu." They also cleared the small temple of Sety I to the north and drew a new plan of the site.[55]

But the biggest event of the season was the discovery of the ruins of the temple of Aye and

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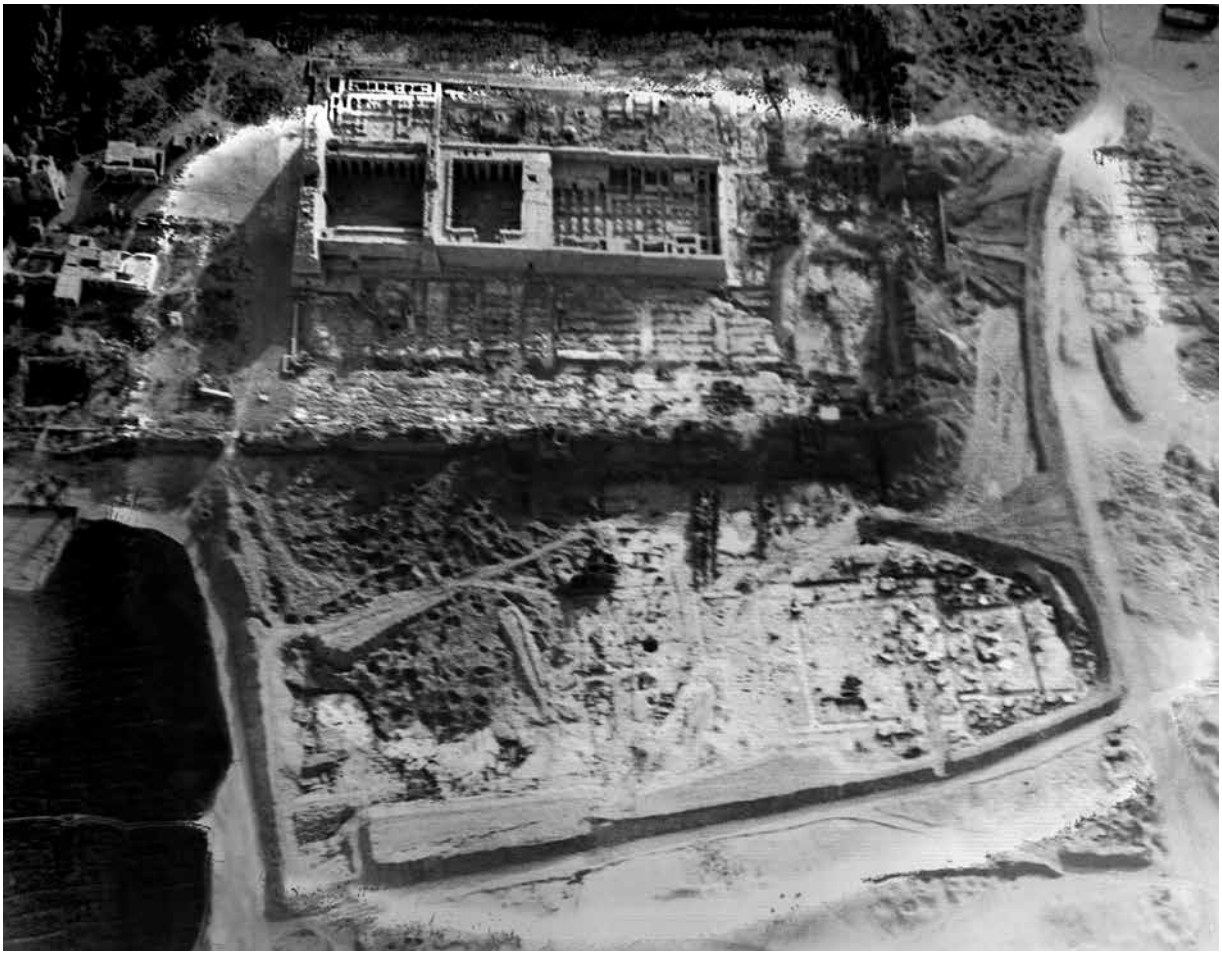

Figure 4.9. The ruins of the temple of Aye and Horemheb discovered in 1930. Photo: R. Hawthorne.

Horemheb just north of the wall at Medinet Habu (fig. 4.9). On December 20, Nelson received an extremely polite letter from the local official Tewfik Boulos, the chief inspector of Thebes for the Antiquities Service,[56] reading:

> Dear Mr. H. Nelson: When Monsieur Lacau was at Gurna the day before yesterday, he saw your workmen digging outside the surrounding wall north of the Temple of Medinet Habu. He told me that the digging is out of your concession. Could I know why your workmen were digging outside your concession and will you be so kind as to order them to stop work until you obtain a permit from the central office.[57]

A flurry of letters between Breasted, Nelson, and Hölscher followed. On December 31, 1930, Hölscher reported to Breasted:

> This year, I have now excavated north beyond the Ramses wall and thereby advanced up to the road that leads from the Tombs of the Queens to Medinet Habu. There, Mr. Lacau had the excavation shut down by the Inspector General, in the mistaken assumption that I had advanced into French excavation areas. As he himself, however, has realized in the meantime, the French boundary lies beyond this road, namely at a distance of at least 150 m from the Ramses wall. The only question that can therefore be involved is whether the narrow strip

> that lies between the Ramses town and the French concession—which factually belongs to Medinet Habu and on which we as well as earlier excavators have dumped our debris—is being claimed by the Antiquities Service for itself or is to be included in our concession.[58]

Hölscher did not help matters when he wrote to his colleague Junker for advice. As recounted by Nelson, Junker suggested that Hölscher "say nothing about the find of the temple nor . . . ask for any further definition of our concession."[59] Nelson was worried about the impact on the overall work. As he wrote to Charles Breasted, "Medinet Habu gives me pause. The whole situation is most unfortunate. . . . Had we not found the temple, probably Lacau would have let us off with a small outburst. As it is he has ammunition to make a big bang. I do trust the matter will settle down satisfactory in the end, but I shall be anxious about it till it does."[60]

Nelson went to Cairo to plead Chicago's case, writing to the elder Breasted on December 24, 1930:[61]

> I called at the Secretariat of the Department in Cairo and went into the matter of the stoppage of our work outside the inclosure. I talked with Lacau and came away with the distinct impression that the action he took was due to his desire to put pressure on us, and not at all because it was necessary so to do. Lacau said he stopped our work because he was sure we were digging within the limits of the French concession. I then asked him to be allowed to see the map of the French concession and on being shown it, told him that we were certainly not encroaching on anyone's preserves. The French concession begins 150 meters north of the north wall of M. H. at the edge of the cultivation and runs back towards the "gebel" at an angle which widens the distance between it and M. H. inclosure as it retreats towards the mountain. As a consequence the area between M. H. inclosure and the French concession is even wider where we were digging than it is at the edge of the cultivation. As a matter of fact, we have nowhere gone more than 143 meters from the wall of the inclosure. Lacau also produced your original application for authorization to excavate Medinet Habu, of which letter I do not have a copy. In that letter you state that the area we desire is within the inclosure of Medinet Habu with sufficient outside to allow of our discovering whether or not there were towers along the inclosure wall. By the strict terms of your application we had exceeded our limits, but on the other hand, our authorization from the government merely states that we may excavate at Medinet Habu, Luxor Markaz, according to the subjoined map. But there never has been a map. Lacau asked why we did not have a map and I pointed out that the absence of such a map was as much the fault of the Department as it was of ourselves. . . . Hoelscher is now preparing a map for our application which will include the land between the inclosure of M. H. and the limit of the French concession and about 150 meters on the west and south sides and the area between the outer wall and the cultivation on the east side.

On December 31, Hölscher defended his actions to Breasted: "According to the wording and meaning of the concession instrument, I believe that we are in the right." He too mentioned the lack of an official plan of the site:

> Since no boundaries have thus been unambiguously fixed, the question as to what the geographical term Medinet Habu covers must be asked. . . . My interpretation of the concession has also in fact remained uncontested over the course of four years since I have excavated outside the ring wall from the first year on: In the first year (1927/8), the southwest corner of the great Ramses wall was unearthed from the outside and the space in front of the wall was explored for a distance of about 40 m. And together with you, Professor Breasted, Mr. Lacau viewed this location without raising any objection. In all years, we have stored our excavation debris outside the Ramses area, up to a distance of 120 m in part. It would have been archaeologically irresponsible

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> if I had not previously investigated the locations I wanted to use as dumps. That occurred quite openly in front of everyone's eyes, and we never experienced an objection. 50 m beyond the Ramses wall, we uncovered a Coptic church last year, an investigation that we have continued this year,—all without objection on the part of the authorities.[62]

Charles Breasted (fig. 4.10) was then in Cairo, and in a letter of December 30, he reported a meeting with Lacau. The text reflects a condescending and bullying attitude that marks much of his correspondence:

> He insisted we were wrong in having dug beyond the limits definitely asked for in the Director's letter of February, 1927 (he let me see this, together with our whole dossier, etc.); and in this he is perfectly right. . . . So after a few more Roman candles, he reassumed his role of The Great God Brown and explained to me that if the Committee ever heard the real inside story of all this they would never, never, never, never—in fact, I gathered, never at all—grant us a second concession,* to which we were however, as he reluctantly admitted, we were fully entitled. Our record is still clear: we always have got what we set out for—it simply wanted a bit of waiting. Tell Hoelscher to have patience. I suspect that the things the dig will ultimately reveal will prove well worth the wait.[63]

Nelson reported to the elder Breasted on the progress toward a resolution:

> Lacau said that he saw no reason why the demand should not be granted and we certainly have the strongest kind of case for our contention that the area where we have been working belongs within the limits of our concession. I do not anticipate any difficulty. Meanwhile we can push on with the work inside the wall and return to the outside when the reply from the Government arrives. Lacau is evidently intent on standing on the letter of the law. In future, I shall see that nothing occurs that can give him any sort of handle to interfere with our work. He had technical right on his side in this instance, but had we been a French expedition, this would not have happened.[64]

Figure 4.10. Charles Breasted, his father's executive secretary, who handled much of the business for the Oriental Institute, ca. 1930. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

In a later letter, Nelson elaborated on the situation, reporting that a few days earlier,

> he [Lacau] was graciousness itself. . . . He expressed himself as greatly interested in the find and regarded it as very important. He proposed that, instead of limiting our application for the new concession to the 50 meters north of the outer wall of Medinet Habu, we should extend it to the boundary of the French Concession, a few meters beyond and

* In reference to the permission to document the temples of Ramesses III at Karnak.

> added, that should we find it necessary to go beyond this line into the French area, we could doubtless arrange that with the French. He added he hoped to be able to secure the permission for us to resume work in the site by the beginning of March. "But," he added, "don't do it again," or words to that effect. . . . It is a relief to have that difficulty settled, though how it could have eventuated otherwise, I do not know. . . . Lacau wants us to clear the whole area to the north of the inclusure [*sic*] down to the cultivation. In fact, I am inclined to think that we should be obliged to do so, for there may have been a Fortified Gate in front of the temple just as there was before Medinet Habu. . . . Hoelscher thinks there is evidence of another temple under a Coptic cemetery. That we cannot learn till next season.[65]

Later, Breasted and Nelson sheepishly admitted that they could have handled the situation more diplomatically. In the preliminary report for the season, the Oriental Institute acknowledged the support of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale "for permission to prospect in its adjoining territory for the northern girdle wall of the Temple of Aye and Horemheb."[66]

The season also saw unrest in Luxor. Hölscher reported, "Growing unemployment in the overpopulated land led to an increase in crime. Ultimately the police, in co-operation with the army, interfered with energetic and successful steps for its suppression in our immediate vicinity. Twice we were forced to turn over to the police instigators of unrest."[67] On one of these occasions, a foreman, Hussein Harb, was hit in the head with a hoe and so badly injured that he was sent to a hospital in Cairo.[68] Hölscher's report for the season said that "fortunately, after long and tedious special treatment, he was dismissed as fully recovered and is now able to perform his duties as well as ever."

The Last Season of Excavation, 1931

The last excavation season ran from October 14, 1931, to March 1, 1932,[69] and was busy on several fronts. The new house in Luxor had opened in April 1931, and Nelson was consumed with its final details.

The staff for the last field season included Hölscher and his wife, Ottilie, and Steckeweh and his wife, Hetha, who "helped in his architectural drawings." Anthes was responsible for the small finds, and Diederika Seele handled "the arduous task of registering the objects, listing the finds preparatory to division, etc."[70] This group continued to live at the old Chicago House near the temple, while the epigraphic staff moved to the new house in Luxor. Leichter, whose primary appointment was to the Epigraphic Survey, continued as photographer. He lived in his own house in Luxor.

Work in the temple focused primarily on the west side of the site; the Survey reported, "We had only to free an enormous structure situated in the western part of the Great Girdle Wall—a structure which proved to be a second fortified gate" (see figs. 3.52 and 3.53 in chapter 3) and necessitated the demolition of the field house that stood on top of the mound.[71]

They also excavated seven mudbrick chapels west of the enclosure wall. All the superstructures had been destroyed, so their plans were established by tracing their foundations. Hölscher related the destruction of five of them to the ruin of the Western High Gate at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty. He surmised that they were rebuilt between the Twenty-First and Twenty-Fifth Dynasties and, at that time, the other two chapels were added to the group.[72] Hölscher suggested that the "40–50" sandstone blocks from the chapel of Paser that had been discovered in the ruins of the Western High Gate originally came from one of these chapels. Although the burial chambers of the chapels were very disturbed, many small finds were recovered, including canopic jars and heart scarabs.

The temple of Aye and Horemheb was partially cleared that season. Hölscher wrote, "We are particularly interested in the Eye temple because it helps to fill the gap in our knowledge of the mortuary temples of the Empire from the temple of Hatshepsut to those of the 19th Dynasty."[73] But

the poorly preserved temple did not provide the hoped-for data: "We cannot yet answer numerous questions which have arisen, for it is evident that the temple of Eye was practically demolished by use as a stone quarry."* The excavators explored its reuse by Ramesses IV and in the later Third Intermediate Period, and its further use as a cemetery in the Roman and Coptic eras. A Coptic church was found just to the north of the Ramesside girdle wall.

Among the many finds from the Eighteenth Dynasty temple were a pair of colossal quartzite statues of a standing king (fig. 4.11), each approximately 5.25 meters tall, and another pair in limestone, about 5.20 meters tall, of a seated king.[74] Fragments of the latter had been discovered much earlier by Lepsius, and other fragments were already in museums in Cairo and Berlin. What was identified as the crown for the Berlin statue was sent to join it.† All four statues were inscribed for Horemheb over the name Aye.‡ "Countless" other statue fragments were also recovered. One statue fragment (Cairo Museum JdE 59857) bore a hieratic graffito dated to year 27 of Horemheb. Lacau ordered that the two quartzite statues be moved from the site and stored at Chicago House for safekeeping. With the help of French archaeologist Émile Baraize, the statues were loaded onto carts and over four days transported to the house.[75] Nelson mused, "Just how we are ever going to get them down to Cairo, I do not know."[76]

Hölscher concluded that the colossal statues were originally made for Tutankhamun, erected

Figure 4.11. Monumental quartzite statue of Tutankhamun(?) usurped by Aye and Horemheb, discovered in December 1930. Two statues were discovered; one is in Chicago, the other in Cairo. Photo: A. Ressman, ISAC Museum Archives.

* Many of the blocks were transferred across the river and incorporated into the Khonsu Temple at Karnak in antiquity.

† A number of letters address whether the crown sent to Berlin actually belonged to the Cairo statue. Ultimately, Hölscher and Nelson decided that the match was correct, primarily because it was limestone and the crowns for the two quartzite statues were accounted for. See E. Teeter, "The OI and 100 Years of Tutankhamun: Part 1," *Oriental Institute News and Notes* 252 (Autumn 2022): 7–8.

‡ In OIC 15 (1932), 51, Hölscher asserted, "Various signs prove undeniably that it was the name of Tutankhamon." However, the only earlier signs are those of Aye.

by Aye, and then usurped by Horemheb.[77] This Tutankhamun connection created sensitivities with the Antiquities Service, especially as the division of the small finds from Medinet Habu approached. The memory of the rancorous lawsuit between the Egyptian government and the estate of Lord Carnarvon over the division of finds from the tomb of Tutankhamun, in which Lacau played a central and Breasted a lesser role, was still fresh. Nelson and Breasted expressed their concern that the ill will over Chicago's having dug beyond its concession in 1930, and now the discovery of the Tutankhamun statues, would create a climate in which the Antiquities Service would be reluctant to give a generous division to Chicago, which anticipated being granted artifacts for its new museum.*

Although the excavation concluded on March 1, 1932, additional work remained to be done at the site. As Nelson relayed to Breasted:

> You will notice that Hoelscher has included an item of $2,000 for such necessary clearing of uncertain places in the area of our concession as he may feel from time to time will require further investigation. On the other hand, he informed me, when he left at the end of February, that he considered the regular excavation had been completed. Personally, I feel that more should be done around the western gate of the enclosure, which Hoelscher uncovered at the end of his work this season. I do not feel at all happy with the amount of investigation that this spot has received and should, therefore, like to add to his request another $1,000 or $1,500 that I might advance Hoelscher for this purpose, should it seem wise on consultation with him to carry out further excavation at this spot.[78]

Although this was to be the last season of excavation, Breasted expressed his wish to Nelson that Hölscher's fieldwork not be rushed: "I quite agree with you and Hölscher that we ought not to leave our Medinet Habu excavation out at ragged ends at any point. The job ought to be finished in such a way that we can look back upon it with complete confidence as a satisfactorily finished project."[79]

Final Work and the Division of Finds, 1932

The 1932 season was devoted to a last examination of the Small Temple of Amun and the temple of Aye and Horemheb, and to a final division of the finds between Chicago and the Egyptian Antiquities Service.[80] The staff consisted of Hölscher, his wife Ottilie, and artist Dietrich Marcks, who produced many line drawings. Diederika Seele and Leichter continued. Anthes came for two and a half months of the season.[81] Steckeweh was not on the staff for this last season of excavation.

The division of the finds occurred in March 1933.[82] The lead-up to it was fraught because of the memory of the legal battles over who owned the objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun, and the finds from the temple of Aye and Horemheb were associated with Tutankhamun. As Breasted wrote, "The name of Tutankhamun is enough to set the river on fire."[83]

Breasted, of course, hoped that one, or even two, of the colossal royal statues would be granted to Chicago. Yet overall, the division conjured a sense of dread, as reflected by Nelson's report to Breasted: "I do not look forward with pleasure to the time when we shall make our division with the Department."[84] Breasted suggested, "The problem of division with the Government is a difficult one. If we wait until after the New Mortuary Temple [Aye and Horemheb] is cleared, there are reasons why Lacau might claim everything from the new temple, giving us as compensation everything that has been found in the Ramses III Temple. Hoelscher agreed with me however that it would be wise to hold off the division until the new temple has been completely excavated."[85] The following year, the question of the statues again arose as Breasted wrote to Nelson, "I find myself

* The Oriental Institute building with its museum and the new Chicago House both opened in April 1931.

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wondering what you have in mind as the policy to be pursued at the end of this season regarding the whole question of the division. Our distinguished friend, Lacau, should give us one of the statues which Hölscher found. If the division of the Ramses III discoveries is made at the same time as those of the Eye-Harmhab Temple, it would give Lacau a chance to deal liberally with us at the Ramses III Temple and keep both the statues from the Harmhab Temple. It may be worthwhile to think of keeping the two divisions separate."[86] On March 7, 1933, Breasted requested that the division be made when he was in Luxor, perhaps hoping that he might be able to influence the decision.

According to a terrible poem about the occasion penned by Chicago House librarian Phoebe Byles and dated April 2, 1933, there were several rounds of selection. One was made by a "deputy from Cairo," who selected "the good ones" ("Shepenupet, Tutankhamen, Jasper hand, one lotus column"); the deputy "chose the nice things and left the rubbish." Two more divisions were made by "Government officials" who "dictated lists to Mrs. Seele, left this lady quite exhausted." Lacau himself came for the final round. As Hölscher recalled, "Many of the large reliefs, etc., especially such pieces as have to do with the structural coherence of the buildings of Medinet Habu, were left on the spot, to be arranged in a local museum."* The ostraca (inscribed sherds of pottery or flakes of stone) were loaned to the Oriental Institute for long-term study. In anticipation of the division, Nelson ordered 180 wood crates of various dimensions from the Anglo-American Nile & Tourist Company in Cairo, paying a not inconsiderable £E75 for the lot. They were delivered in the first week of March 1933.

* OIC 18, 92. Some of that material is now displayed on mastabas (platforms) in front of the blockyard located in the southeast corner of the precinct (see fig. 3.50 in chapter 3). The "museum" was never built.

Hölscher's Study Seasons in Luxor, 1933–1935

The 1933 season was one of study for Hölscher. He requested to be housed in a few rooms at the new Chicago House, while Anthes stayed in Berlin.[87] During the summer and first part of the season, he was paid an honorarium to work on the manuscript detailing the small finds.[88]

Hölscher returned to Luxor for the 1934 and 1935 seasons, living at Chicago House as he worked on the publications.[89] Little is known about his routine during these years, but he kept up a steady correspondence with Chicago, documented by many letters to and from Egyptologist T. G. Allen in the Oriental Institute publications office about the finalization of *Excavation* II and III.[90] In the summers, he continued his work on the publications from his home in Hanover.

In March 1936, Hölscher wrote, "Field work ended this year. The last two people that I still had in Medinet Habu will be discharged as of April 1, and I am only keeping two watchmen in the excavation area until next winter."[91] In May, Wilson advised Hölscher that it was going to be "impossible for you to go out to Egypt next year (or any time in the future)" on behalf of the Oriental Institute.[92]

Many years later, in a letter of June 27, 1950, Hölscher reflected on the six seasons he excavated Medinet Habu for the Oriental Institute, writing to its director, Carl Kraeling, "For me, the excavation of Medinet Habu has been the greatest and most wonderful pursuit of my life, and I am proud to have been able to collaborate in this bold undertaking of the Oriental Institute."[93]

Hölscher and the Oriental Institute after 1936

Although Hölscher no longer went to Luxor after the 1935 season ended, his obligation to deliver the manuscripts for what became *Excavation* II–V entailed a continuing relationship with the Oriental Institute. Nelson was very supportive, writing to

Wilson, "I have informed Hoelscher of your decision whereby he is required to terminate his work in Egypt at the end of next season. It was rather a blow to him though I made it as gentle as possible. He is doing a fine piece of work, far better than any of the kind that has been done in Egypt heretofore. However, even with this handicap I am sure he will produce a magnificent publication." Yet he warned Wilson that "he certainly will not be able to complete his volumes by the end of next season. He will probably have the volume of the Ramesside period ready, but I do not believe he will be able to turn out more than that. If it is in any way possible to subsidize him till he can finish his text volumes, please do so. We must not let that enterprise peter out." He ended the letter with an unexpected offer that he would "cut down epigraphic staff for a few years, as a last resort" to subsidize Hölscher's work.[94] The Oriental Institute paid Hölscher a salary of $6,000 (without travel expenses), plus $500 for "drafting and editorial expenses" to work on the publications.[95]

And so, from late 1936 through the war years, Hölscher worked on the final publications from his home in Hanover where, from 1937 to 1947, he also served as professor at the Hanover Technical University. As the war approached, the financial situation became complicated, both as a result of the massive budget cuts to all Chicago projects and because of an embargo against sending dollars to Germany. In September 1937, Hölscher wrote to Wilson, "Since the end of June 1937, i.e., since the end of the fiscal year 1936/37, I have been very surprised to have no longer received any salary from the Oriental Institute. I at first believed that there was merely a delay in the transfer of funds; now, however, I am forced to assume that a stoppage of the salary payment is involved. That surprises me, since I did not read any termination of my position at the Oriental Institute into our earlier correspondence."[96] Later that September, a payment of $3,000 per year for two years was approved.[97]

But the work on the publications took longer than anticipated, and there were letters about additional honoraria. In 1939, Wilson proposed what was termed a "final payment" of $3,000, writing, "I recognize that $3000 is not a large sum for the work of one or two years in relation to your former honorarium. However, the plain fact of the matter is that we cannot afford to pay at any such rate. . . . If you can find means of cutting down on the work or the material which is to go into the volume, it will be wise, as I can only offer you a payment in the sum of $1500 as a final settlement."[98] Hölscher accepted the lower sum. In a cruel turn of events, when the manuscript was delivered in 1947 (see "Publications of the Architectural Survey" later in this chapter), the Oriental Institute was unable to transfer the funds to him because "United States government regulations prohibit the forwarding of funds to nationals of Germany."[99] It was not until January 1950 that the final payment was received.

Although direct financial support for Hölscher stopped in 1947 after the receipt of the manuscript for *Excavation* V,* Elizabeth Hauser, the Oriental Institute publications manager, extended humanitarian aid to him and to Anthes. Hauser was acquainted with both men from having served as the translator for their manuscripts and as the editor of *Excavation* IV and V. Many long letters attest to her work on the manuscripts; some of those from Hölscher are very critical of her work on his behalf. She also spent many hours arranging for duplication of the excavation lists and photographs for Hölscher's use in writing the last volumes.

* One further payment of $400 was made in May 1950 for "redrawing of certain plans for a forthcoming publication that were destroyed during the war in bombing attack" (H. C. Daines to Kraeling, 17 May 1950, ISAC Museum Archives). Oriental Institute director Kraeling closed the memo with the note, "I am writing Professor Hoelscher that he is to expect no further payments from us in the future."

Hauser continued to communicate with Hölscher and Anthes as the volumes were readied for publication.* Over the years, a personal relationship developed, and the letters contain heartbreaking details of the privations of postwar Germany. In September 1948, Hölscher reported to her that his house had finally been rebuilt, "although under extraordinary difficulties, personal efforts and disproportionate costs."[100] In October 1948, he wrote to her, saying, "We must now manage very frugally with our time since, without electricity, we must use the daylight as best we can for writing, and I had to postpone letter-writing for a long time."[101]

Anthes described his own situation to Hauser on October 3, 1948:

> We are anticipating the heating question in winter with serious worries, but we hope that some way will be found that prevents a catastrophe. And, naturally, the darkness is a great impediment to every activity: since June 24, we have only two respective hours of electricity between 9 and 5 during the day and between 11 and 5 o'clock during the night, so that we are practically entirely dependent on candles and kerosene for light, and these are only available on the "black market", i.e., buying these things can be punished with prison. The controlled economy of all goods prevents a clear pricing and makes people dishonest, and the moral side of these temporal worries is probably the most crucial.[102]

A year later, on December 30, 1949, Anthes updated Hauser on his situation:

> The conditions this year here in Germany are far better than last year. Then, most things could only be bought on the "black market" but now the stores are full; however, it turns out that people cannot purchase much, but people know that in other countries, too. The starvation of the past year has, thanks be to God, been overcome. . . . We have light and heat this winter, and this makes us happy when we recall the dark year without coal last year. In the countryside around Berlin, however, there are many "blackout" hours (without electrical power) and still some real starvation, or at least very short rations. In addition, the conditions there and in East Berlin are very spiritually and morally depressing. Let us hope with all our hearts that the year 1950 frees us from these oppressive conditions. . . . Let us hope that the second half of this century can work itself out of this morass our generation got it into in a respectable way! I indeed believe and hope that the values of humanity, goodness and freedom shall prevail over the Soviet ideas over time. In 1945, quite a few of us indeed believed that the Russians might bring us renewal, but they frustrated this hope from the very start. The Soviet-style system that now rules in East Germany and East Berlin is based solely on a meager "governing" caste and is definitely rejected by the people.[103]

Hauser sent both families Red Cross care packages and other parcels of food that she personally selected and packed. In October 1948, she asked Anthes what he and his wife, Agathe, lacked, to which he replied:

> Your sympathetic question about what would make us especially happy has led to quite some brain-racking moments on our part. . . . Of course, the truly nutritious things are what are especially important, and fat, which we are in dire need of, stands at the head of the list; eggs, milk and cheese have been missing from the Berlin menu for many years, so that I no longer even thought of those things. . . . But things intended for the heart and palate are also very important, and coffee thereby comes in first for us. That nice "saccharine" that can replace a great deal of sugar would also be very desirable. Sending cigarettes, of course, is still not permitted. . . . But now I've already said more than enough, and this list shall indeed be supplemented with a different mention: of all the many, kind gifts that we have received from abroad during these

* *Excavation* IV was published in 1951 and *Excavation* V in 1954.

> years, there was hardly ever anything that we considered superfluous, rather everything provided us with great pleasure and helped us very much in overcoming the difficulties of the time. . . . For the housewife, of course, life is especially difficult: added to the customary "ration coupon economy" and the long lines, the many shopping trips depending on which merchant received what goods, there is also the difficulty of the two currencies. . . . As said, all of these things require a great deal of time and energy that should be utilized for better things; but that is simply unavoidable and is overcome.[104]

Hölscher's thanks, written on February 8, 1948, were no less heartfelt:

> I must first express my delight and surprise about the promised food package that you shall be sending me. Up to a certain extent, of course, there is something embarrassing about it that we Germans should make use of the liberality of our friends abroad with whom we are allegedly still at war. However, I cannot deny that I gladly and gratefully accept a package, and since we are in fact in need of the help since we currently do not receive even a single gram of butter and fat for an entire month. The housewife who must cook here for 7 persons often does not know where to start. I, of course, do not know what good things you have destined for us, but since you have directly asked about it I must say that fat would be most important to us or powdered milk for our little six-year-old grandson.[105]

The following year, on December 30, Anthes thanked Hauser for another shipment of food, which she had taken very great care to package:

> It had already arrived before mid-December, but we did not unpack it until the Sunday before Christmas after the list of contents had provided us with true anticipation. Then came the ceremony of opening; with the solemn assistance of the entire family (my mother-in-law, 85 years old, and sister-in-law live with us), I first undid the 9 m-long string undamaged, and then we were delighted by the charming packaging in the green ribbon. And then on to the truly overwhelming contents, which, moreover, amazed us over and over again with its extraordinarily artistic packing and the perfect use of every space. In form and content, it was truly a perfect work of art; indeed, precisely the contents, too, which presented the glories of this world in such a festive way. The selection of these things was so personal and discerning, and you beautified the holiday for us in an impressive way. My wife and I thank you and Mr. Hauser from a grateful and happy heart for this kind and friendly act. Yet allow me to point out that this goodness indeed makes us fully aware of our unworthiness. These gifts are not only treasures for us but are also truly expensive things even in America, and so you have considerably diminished your own Christmas feast.[106]

The letters Hauser and Hölscher exchanged with Anthes are emotionally moving snapshots of the very personal impact of war, the reduced circumstances of proud professional men, and the compassion of a hardworking and empathetic editor.

Relations between the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys

Although there was obvious respect between Nelson and Hölscher, their professional relationship was often strained. The main point of contention was Nelson's level of control over Hölscher and his team, and their respective titles and authority. There was also a persistent and unfortunate undercurrent of American nationalism expressed by anti-German (and often generally antiforeign) comments. Additional problems were created by Hölscher's and Nelson's separately communicating with Breasted and the time lag between their letters.

To contextualize the exchanges between the parties, it is important to recall that neither Breasted nor Nelson had ever conducted an excavation in

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Egypt, whereas Hölscher had many years of experience working in the field, mainly at Abusir, and he had a system of organization and recording that he wished to retain. In contrast, Breasted and Nelson seemed to think the Medinet Habu excavation should be run the same way as Megiddo. The Palestine project started in fall 1925, so it had only a year of precedent for Chicago to use as a pattern for Luxor. Nelson wrote to Breasted in 1927 before the excavation season even started:

> I do not therefore wish to erect [*sic*] the work of the Excavation into a separate undertaking. That would be contrary to the purpose for which we have entered upon it. While Hoelscher is quite right in wishing to establish a sense of unity in the group under his direction, I personally do not wish to see them too greatly separated from the rest of the Expedition. I believe the Epigraphic Staff and the Excavation Staff should regard themselves as part of the same undertaking, the recording and publishing of the Temple of Medinet Habu. But there are other reasons why I do not wish to see the two parts of the work separated. I am personally very agreeably impressed by Professor Hoelscher after my contact with him last winter. He is agreeable and social and easy to get along with. On the other hand, I told Mrs. Nelson before, that I believe he might be stubborn and difficult under certain circumstances and that he might push interests of his own if occasion arose.[107]

On September 5, 1927, Hölscher wrote a long letter to Nelson outlining his understanding and expectations of his responsibilities outlined in his communications with Breasted:

> I see that we are of different opinions about the concept of the directorship of the excavations that was accorded to me. In the letter that Prof. Breasted wrote me on April 30, present, and of which you presumably received a carbon, my job is defined to the effect "to undertake the conduct of the proposed excavations." Mr. Breasted continues: "I am calling the expedition from now on the Epigraphic and Architectural Survey. The field directorship of both the epigraphic and architectural enterprises of the expedition will be held by Prof. Nelson, but in accordance with the former understanding between you and me, you will have full liberty of action in carrying on your architectural survey in accordance with the plans which you deem best adapted for the successful completion of the work." It proceeds therefrom that you, as field director, are in charge of both sections, but that I, as director "of my architectural survey" have full liberty to act at my discretion. I can therefore not entirely share your interpretation, in accord wherewith you have written, "I do not intend in any way to interfere with the technical details of the excavations, but I do intend to keep in touch with the work in all its branches. That is what I am employed for by the University of Chicago." For me, it is not a matter of technical details, but of the entire establishment of the excavation operations. . . . We must come to an understanding with one another as to which of us is in charge of the excavation matters, so that practical differences of opinion do not ultimately become personal animosity, which the two of us must absolutely avoid.[108]

The disagreements over control extended to Hölscher's documentation of the excavation. Nelson wrote to Breasted, "I note that Hoelscher has had all the forms for the excavation printed in Germany, presumably in German, and that his wife is to do the recording, also presumably in German. . . . It is unfortunate, moreover, that the records at Megiddo and Luxor cannot be kept on the same system. It would be much more satisfactory all round."[109] Hölscher responded to Nelson:

> In my opinion, it is rather insignificant whether, for example, the forms to be printed have exactly the same size and divisions as in Megiddo or whether the pre-print thereon is printed in German or in

> English,—there is usually no text at all on our forms!—we simply dare not let a disparity arise between German and American work! At any rate, I keep the day books and descriptions of finds in the German language, and when Mr. DeLoach keeps them, he will keep them in English. When selecting my colleagues, it is not critical to me whether they speak English or German but whether I am convinced that they will fit perfectly into the excavation operations as I envision them or not.*

Hölscher somewhat disingenuously made the case that Nelson was already too busy to supervise the excavations and that granting him more independence was in Nelson's own best interests:

> I am convinced that, given the monstrous workload that you already took upon yourself last year, you cannot be constantly concerned with the excavation. Just as was done in the previous year, I would be more than happy to keep you up to date on what is going on in the excavation in a spirit of camaraderie, to in fact preserve the most intimate accord with you, especially since I am particularly dependent on your help in matters of philology and other questions. But you must admit that I cannot now depart from the powers granted me in matters of the excavation—since I have gathered excavating experience in 7 seasons of digging.[110]

Breasted stepped in to smooth the waters and clarify the chain of command: "I am informing Hölscher that the excavation is a part of our Medinet Habu campaign as a whole and is therefore a subdivision of the expedition of which you [Nelson] are Field Director"[111] (fig. 4.12).

Months later, Nelson wrote to Hölscher, vigorously upholding his role as overall director of the work:

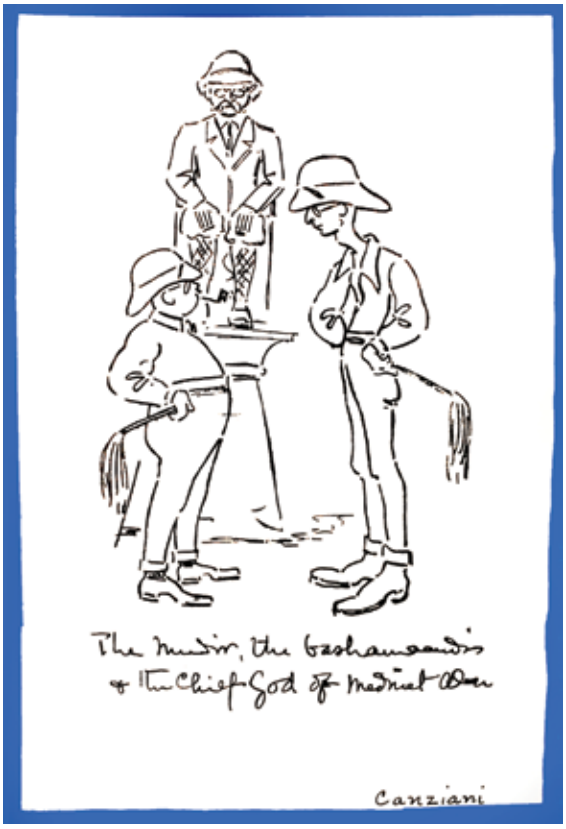

Figure 4.12. Cartoon by Canziani with Nelson (left) and Hölscher (right) and Breasted in between, labeled "The mudir, the bashamuhandis [head] and the Chief God of Medinet Habu," reflecting the pecking order of the project's administration. Image: ISAC Museum Archives.

> The Excavation is being undertaken entirely as a part of the work of the Epigraphic Expedition, not as an independent enterprise. For myself (and I believe in this matter I also voice Professor Breasted's feelings as he has expressed them to me), I regret that we have been forced to undertake any excavation at all. However, from the time I first began work at Medinet Habu, I realized that we must clear the out-buildings of the Temple before we could be sure that we had completely recorded the inscriptions and reliefs at Medinet Habu and had made a satisfactory architectural record as well. We are therefore undertaking this work as an adjunct to the main business of the Expedition, not as an ordinary piece of Excavation. For that reason I feel that it is an integral part of the work now under

* Hölscher to Nelson, 5 September 1927, ISAC Museum Archives. The *Tagebücher* were kept in German, except for a few direct quotes from English-language sources. Almost all the entries were made by Hölscher.

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> my direction. . . . In the second place, I believe that it will be very unfortunate to have two independent expeditions living in the same house and working at the same place, without organic connection. Such division in administration always leads to complications, some of which I can easily foresee. On grounds of general efficiency I am opposed to your suggestion. . . . You may be sure that I shall do everything in my power to further the particular branch of the work assigned to you, but I do not believe that it will be for the best interests of all concerned to divide the two branches of the work into two separate Expeditions.[112]

Nelson followed up a few weeks later with a letter to Breasted: "I have read Hoelscher's letter to you of August 24, and, though he does not say directly that he wants an entirely independent organization, it seems to me that it amounts to the same thing. I personally do not want the men engaged in the dig to feel that they belong only to that one enterprise, but that they are part of a larger undertaking and that their work is contributing to a larger end."[113]

The conversation dragged on, with Nelson writing to Hölscher, "With the construction of an excavation house at the Temple, where you and the other members of the Excavation Staff may get together and where the disposition of the work may be made according to your own ideas, it seems to me that you will be able to secure that esprit de corps which you naturally so much desire. In other words, I believe that the ends for which you and I also are working may be secured without setting up two entirely separate organizations."[114]

But the excavation house* seems to have bred too much esprit de corps. Nelson started to regard it as some sort of Germans-only clubhouse and complained to Breasted: "I am afraid that if the young German [Steckeweh] comes, and if Hoelscher and his wife, the German assistant and De Loach, eat their noon meal and tea at the fieldhouse at Medinet Habu, De Loach will soon find himself out of it. He speaks no German and Mrs. Hoelscher speaks no English."[115] He also complained that Hölscher's group did not return to nearby Chicago House for lunch with the rest of the staff, to which Hölscher responded:

> If the noon break is from 12 o'clock until 12:50, then at least one member of the excavation staff must remain at work and the other starting at 12:50. That length of time does not suffice for going to Chicago House, washing up, eating and returning, particularly during the noonday heat. And, as you know, the motorcar is not exclusively at the disposal of the excavation staff. As long as the excavation is underway, we must be able to take a simple lunch there (an egg dish, vegetables, preserves, cold cuts or the like). . . . This separation of the dig participants during working hours will in no way break up communal life in Chicago House since, of course, we will be back every evening no later than dinner time.

Ironically, Hölscher followed this reply with a request for special, separate lunch service: "We do not need a polished cook for this, merely a young servant who will take care of us in conjunction with Chicago House."[116]

There were also struggles over Hölscher's autonomy in selecting and managing his staff. He communicated special umbrage to Nelson over the Breasteds—both father and son—sending personnel from the Megiddo Excavation to work at Medinet Habu without consulting him: "I, in contrast, felt that my efforts at concentrating all forces available for the excavation are being thwarted when arrangement and personnel of the Megiddo staff are being forced upon me without prior consultation, whereby I do not know whether they will easily adapt to my system."[117] One particular case was Ting Hunter (see fig. 12.3 in chapter 12), who Charles Breasted initially told Hölscher would be joining his team, again without consultation or expression of need. Charles made arrangements for him to arrive in Luxor in October 1929, but then made it clear that Hunter would be assigned duties

* Also referred to as "the fieldhouse."

related to the design of the new Chicago House for much of the season rather than assisting Hölscher.[118] Hölscher objected, as did Nelson, who wrote to Charles, "Hoelscher ought to be informed as soon as possible, as he is preparing plans for the conduct of the dig on the basis of Hunter's presence and he will be upset should he arrive at Luxor and find that he must make a further adjustment of the work. Such a situation would be a little hard on him."[119] The custom of Chicago's sending staff to the expedition without consulting Hölscher carried over to the *reis*.* Hölscher wanted Sadiq from Junker's excavations, a man with whom he was familiar, while Charles Breasted engaged Hamid Ahmed Hamid, a Qufti from the Megiddo Excavation.[120]

At the end of September, Breasted replied to Nelson, "Whatever may have been Hoelscher's motives in desiring a separate organization, it is in any case not a wise proposal. I hope the matter has now been duly settled."[121]

During the years immediately after the conclusion of the fieldwork, when he was working on the publications at Chicago House (1933–36), Hölscher requested time and assistance from the Epigraphic Survey staff—requests that annoyed Nelson, who reported to Breasted, "He wants me to turn over one day a week of an epigrapher's time to him next year, as he wishes to learn what the inscriptions and reliefs have to say about the use of the various rooms in the temple. I think it is dangerous for him to attempt a study of a subject which depends almost entirely on a knowledge of the language and which cannot be decided without a great deal of study by a competent philologist. It seems to me that that subject falls more within our province than within his."[122] In response to Hölscher's request that Alfred Bollacher do color work for his excavation volumes, Nelson rather peevishly wrote to Breasted, "Bollacher is due in Egypt on Nov. 8th a week later than in other years. . . . I do not think we can spare him for Hoelscher's work for more than three weeks. This business of Hoelscher's drawings and paintings is much of a bother, especially as the dig has never been really a part of the Expedition."† In any case, according to Nelson, Bollacher "did not like to work for him."[123] Ironically, one of the best known and most reproduced of Bollacher's paintings is the reconstruction of the First Pylon of Medinet Habu that appeared in *Excavation* I (fig. 4.13).

Anti-German Sentiments

Anti-German sentiments expressed by Nelson, and also by Breasted, posed additional difficulties for the harmonious operation of the two parts of the mission. Breasted's comments are surprising, considering that he had lived in Germany, pursued his doctoral studies under the supervision of the great German Egyptologists of the time (Adolph Erman, Kurt Sethe, and Eduard Meyer), was himself fluent in German, and had hired many German-trained staff members for Oriental Institute excavations in the Near East. But there was a sharp divide between the Americans of the Epigraphic Survey and the Germans who made up Hölscher's team, a divide rooted in several circumstances.

One was the aforementioned custom of Hölscher (and Steckeweh) to record the field notes in German, a practice that Nelson objected to but

* This practice of the Breasteds' sending staff to the expeditions without consulting the field director was very much in evidence at the Megiddo Expedition. See Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon*.

† Nelson to Breasted, 30 October 1933, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 294/1479. Bollacher was contracted by the Epigraphic Survey in 1924 to do the color plates for its volumes. Hölscher met Bollacher at Abusir in 1907, so they knew each other, better than Nelson knew Bollacher. On Bollacher, see C. Loeben, "Uvo Hölscher and Architectural Studies (Bauforschung)," in *History and Impact of German Archaeology in the Near East*, edited by K. Goebs and S. Voss, forthcoming; M. Eaton-Krauss and W. el-Saddik, "Fragments of Woodwork in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo," *JARCE* 47 (2011): 192–97.

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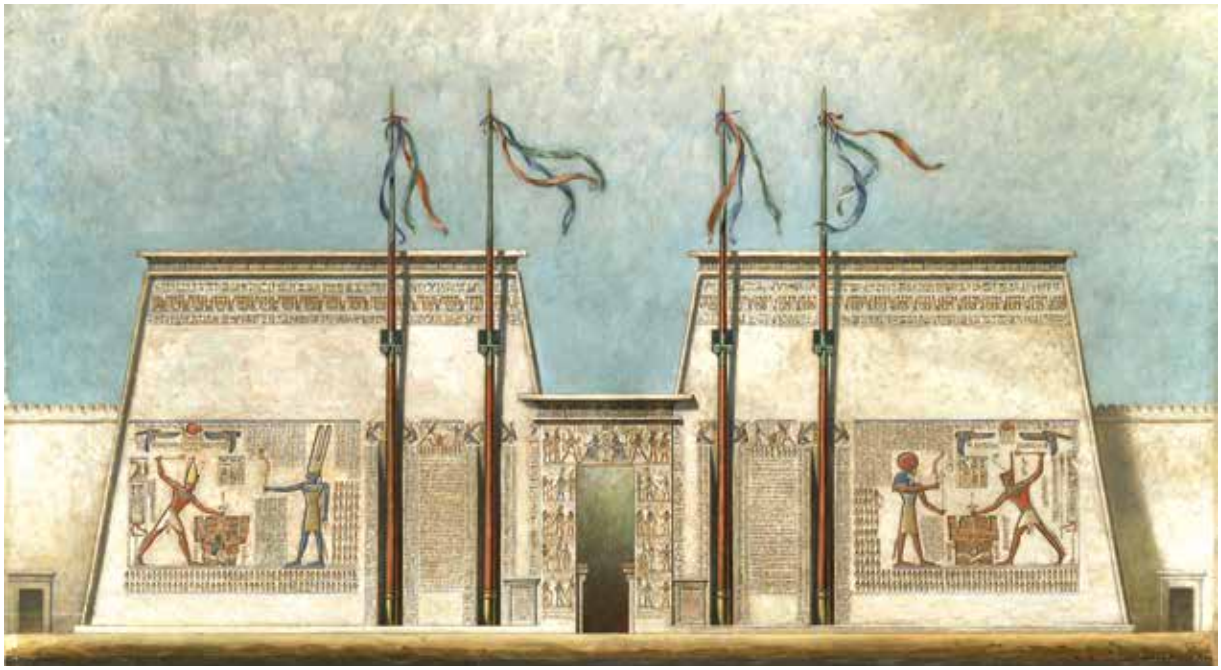

Figure 4.13. Bollacher's color reconstruction of the First Pylon of Medinet Habu, from *Excavation* I, pl. 23.

was not able to change (fig. 4.14).* Another was that, not unexpectedly, the Germans in Hölscher's team tended to socialize with one other rather than with the Americans, and they spoke German to one other, creating an artificial division in the staff. Resentment between the Americans and the Germans grew. References to "the present German interlude,"[124] "the German way," and Germans' high self-esteem† pepper the correspondence. In 1930, when considering the hire of a new photographer, Nelson wrote, "If this also means the further introduction into our midst of Europeans, I shall feel like throwing up the sponge."[125] Nelson commented in fall 1927, even before the excavation started in earnest, "To have an independent German group, living at Chicago House and working at the Temple with us, would be very unfortunate. Moreover, I want to see an American group developed that can undertake such architectural studies in the future. We ought to be independent of any foreign aid in our work."[126] Breasted replied:

> With regard to the Hoelscher situation, I hope that by this time you have ironed out all difficulties. As you know, there was only one man thoroughly acquainted with the architecture of Medinet Habu, and you remember that even Winlock,‡ who is on the whole rather strongly anti-German, spoke in the warmest terms of Hoelscher, both as to ability and personal traits. There was nobody else available to

* This practice led to huge difficulties with the publication of the five Architectural Survey volumes that were written in German and then translated, the first three by Diederika Seele and the last two by Elizabeth Hauser. Many letters refer to disagreements about the translations, especially those done by Hauser.

† Nelson wrote to Breasted (1 April 1927, ISAC Museum Archives), obviously miffed, that he and other Americans, including the staff of Metropolitan House, were not invited to the opening of German House in Gourna, even though Bollacher was. Nelson commented, "I do not know just how many were invited, but I believe it is a small and select company of God's chosen people." For a photograph of the attendees at the opening, see Eaton-Krauss and el-Saddik, "Fragments of Woodwork," 195.

‡ Herbert Winlock, the head of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian Expedition.

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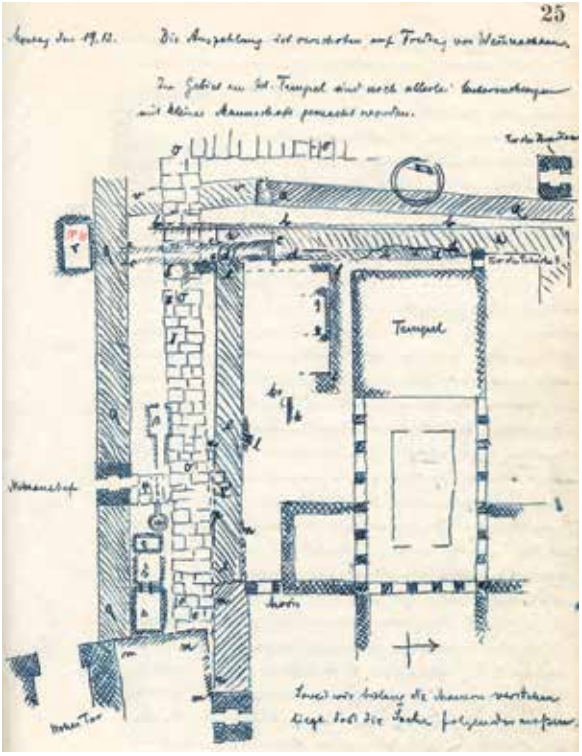

Figure 4.14. Page from Hölscher's excavation diary (*Tagebuch*) for December 19, 1927, detailing architectural features to the south and west of the Small Temple of Amun. Image: ISAC Museum Archives.

> undertake this task. Having once begun the task with a German colleague, there have of course been some consequences which we cannot now avoid. As I have written you, I am making a supreme effort to establish the training of young American archeologists on a permanent basis and I hope that we can man our expeditions and our teaching staffs with such Americans.[127]

This anti-German attitude persisted. In November 1930, Nelson commented, "I hope we do not have another non-Anglo-Saxon in the house."[128] Nelson may have been relieved by the addition of Laurence Woolman, a "first class man" and architect from the University of Pennsylvania whom Charles Breasted sent to Luxor in 1930* to replace Harald Hanson and to make the drawings of the High Gate while also consulting with Ting Hunter on the plans for the new Chicago House. According to Woolman's son, the young architect and Hölscher disagreed about methods and style of rendering. In the American's judgment, the Germans' style "does not appear well done, as they are sloppy and lacking in class," and the renderings were "mechanical and lacking in charm." Woolman stood firm to the more "artistic" training he had received at the University of Pennsylvania, but not surprisingly, Hölscher's opinions prevailed. Woolman's wife, Janet, recalled that they were made uncomfortable by "chauvinistic German attitudes."[129]

In fact, it was not just the Germans that seemed to annoy Nelson, it was the whole process of excavation; he felt the process was at best a necessary evil, and a hindrance to the epigraphic work. Hölscher himself recalled the impact of excavation, with "all the troublesome dust which continually arises. . . . At times, MH was completely enveloped in an opaque and blinding cloud of dust which resembled the thick masses of smoke that hovered over a great conflagration" (fig. 4.15).[130] Nelson related to Breasted, "The excavation at the Temple goes merrily on. . . . Today, whenever the wind changed a little, the dust blew about me so that I could hardly work. I understand that the intention is to begin cleaning out just west of the palace site that Burton cleared and work back along the south wall. That

* Woolman was initially sent to the Megiddo Expedition, also without consultation of the field director, P. L. O. Guy, as indicated by Charles Breasted's comment, "I hope you will not feel that the new man, Mr. Laurence C. Woolman is being inflicted upon you against your wishes. In sending him to you the director is not only giving you an exceptionally able man who will unquestionably be of the greatest assistance to you, but he is hoping to afford an archaeological training to men of sound architectural preparation" (C. Breasted to Guy, 18 May 1929, ISAC Museum Archives). For more about Woolman and his wife, Janet, see chapter 9, "Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition, 1930–1936," and chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–."

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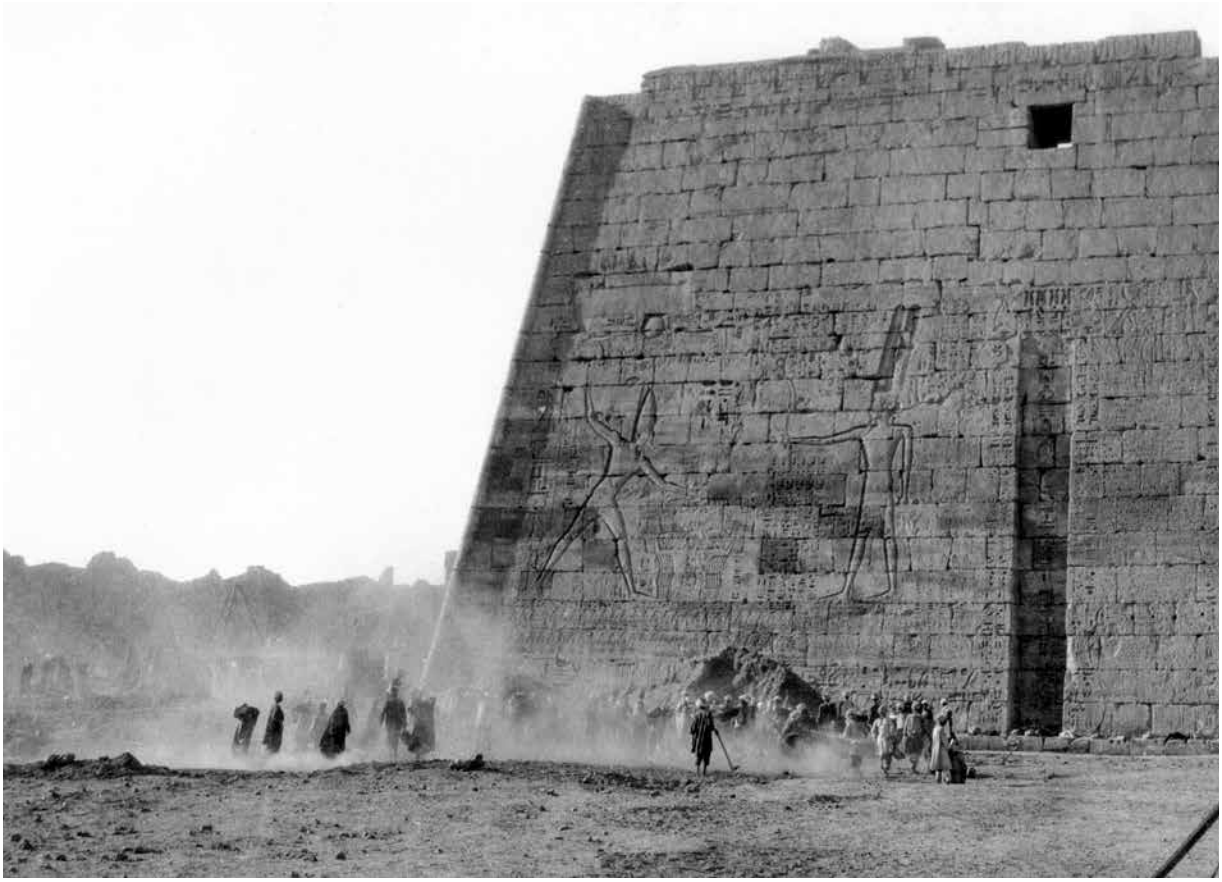

Figure 4.15. Medinet Habu enveloped in clouds of dust, which annoyed Nelson, 1929. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

will mean that we shall find it very difficult to continue with our collation of the calendar while the work is in progress."[131]

The excavations posed another a problem for Nelson and the University of Chicago when, in 1929, a Mr. W. E. MacKnight, who was investigating child labor laws and excavations in Egypt for Save the Children International, lodged "complaints of inhuman treatment of our native workmen at Medinet Habu," citing use of a whip by foremen, the pace of the work, the dust and dirt at the work site, the quality of the drinking water provided, and the wages and hours.[132] The University of Chicago was not alone in these accusations; MacKnight also cited the Metropolitan Museum, Cecil Firth's excavations at Saqqara, and factories in the Delta.[133] Nelson wrote to Breasted, "This malicious old busybody has now submitted a report to the Secretary General, Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants [in Switzerland]. I hope, therefore, that it will not take too much of your time to make a statement concerning two things,—what Mr. MacKnight did and said and what the conditions among our native workers really are." He continued, "Though the man is obviously 'off,' he can make a nasty lot of trouble." Nelson submitted a detailed report on the situation dated November 13.[134] The matter was of great concern, and it dragged on until it was resolved on December 10, 1929, when David Stevens, associate dean of faculties at the University of Chicago, sent a letter of support for their treatment of child workers in Luxor to W. A. MacKenzie, the Secretary General of the Union Internationale de Secours aux Infants in Geneva.[135]

Coda: Revival of the Architectural Survey?

In the 1973–74 Oriental Institute annual report, Kent Weeks, field director of the Epigraphic Survey, proposed "to reinstate the 'Architectural' part of our name by preparing a detailed series of maps of archaeological sites on the west bank."[136] The following year, the report for Luxor was titled "Epigraphic and Architectural Survey," and the year after that, Weeks wrote that a detailed map of a section of the west bank had been produced, revealing many more tombs than had previously been documented. Although he received encouragement from potential donors and other scientific missions in the area, the project did not proceed because of concerns from the Oriental Institute that it "would detract from the epigraphic work."[137] Weeks's interest in mapping led him to form the Theban Mapping Project, whose major publication was the groundbreaking *Atlas of the Valley of the Kings* (1999).

Publications of the Architectural Survey

The plan for publishing the work of the Architectural Survey underwent many changes, some a natural evolution of the progress of the work, others the result of budgetary restrictions that Breasted's death, the worldwide economic depression, and World War II imposed on the Oriental Institute.

There was nevertheless great enthusiasm for publishing the Architectural Survey. In December 1929, Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "Our publication of the excavations is going to be a very important volume. Hoelscher is certainly an extremely penetrating man and is doing a very good piece of work. In his line, there is certainly not a better man in the field."[138]

The Publication Plan

Five volumes of *The Excavation of Medinet Habu* appeared between 1934 and 1954. Five preliminary reports appeared between 1929 and 1934 in the series Oriental Institute Communications (OIC 5, 7, 10, 15, and 18), the first four being published before *Excavation* I.

In May 1932, Hölscher presented a detailed publication plan. It called for one oversized volume (46.5 × 60.0 centimeters) with about "45 single-color and multi-color, partly two-page plates."[139] Forecast to appear in 1933, it was published in 1934 as *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume I: General Plans and Views* (OIP 21).

It was thought that this first volume would be followed by "perhaps" nine smaller text volumes by the Architectural Survey, each 30 × 40 centimeters, with numerous black-and-white plates, a few colored plates, and figures:[140]

> Part I ("probably two volumes") would be devoted to the "overall complex of Medinet Habu and its history. The Architectural Works Before Ramses III," volume 1, would cover the temple of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the second (itself perhaps in two parts), the temple of Aye and Horemheb.
>
> Part II ("probably two volumes") would document the temple complex of Ramses III.
>
> Part III ("probably 1 volume") would contain "The Post-Ramessid Works" (Roman town, cemeteries, the town of Jême; churches; houses; finds and pottery, and reference to ostraca).
>
> Part IV (one volume) was projected to be a "Catalogue of the Individual Finds," including statues, reliefs, and pottery.
>
> Part V ("perhaps 3 volumes?") would be devoted to the hieratic, Greek, and Coptic ostraca.

With the exception of parts IV and V, Hölscher was to be the sole author. Part IV, the catalog, would be prepared by Rudolf Anthes and would include figures of the "more important things," drawings of scarabs, and transcriptions and translations of

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texts. For part V, dealing with the Coptic-era architecture, Hölscher depended on a report on church architecture by Ugo Monneret de Villard.[141] There were numerous discussions about who would publish the ostraca.

The format of the publications was also thoroughly discussed, as well as how the Architectural Survey volumes would coordinate with the epigraphic volumes. In December 1930, Nelson wrote to Breasted:

> If the architectural text volumes are to be of a different format from the O. I. P.,* would it not be well to keep the text of the Epigraphic volumes to the same size. If we do not do so, then we shall have three different sizes in the same series, which is certainly not desirable.† Some of the scenes from the temple that we did not reproduce in the folio volumes I would like to give in the text volumes. A single page of the size used in your text of the Edwin Smith Papyrus is too small and even a double page is at times too small to bring out the detail. To break them in the middle would mean tipping them in. Altogether I feel that the larger size is more desirable. In Hölscher's case it seems to me essential.[142]

The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume I, 1934

Coordinating the appearance of *Excavation* I and II was of concern. Hölscher argued that they should appear as separate volumes but be published at the same time, for "the material of the two volumes throws much light on each other."[143] But Breasted (as expressed via his secretary, Jean Roberts), was not so eager about this plan, as relayed by T. G. Allen, managing editor of all Oriental Institute publications,‡ who argued that it was better to publish each volume when it was ready, "rather than to have all the parts of it lying around for another year."[144] Ultimately, five years separated the publication of *Excavation* I and II.

To a world now accustomed to digital design and printing, producing the first volume was an almost unimaginably complicated process. Three printers on two continents were involved. The manuscript was written in German and then translated into English, the author was in Germany (or Egypt), while the editor and production managers were in Chicago. All communication was done by post with only a few emergencies communicated by telegram. Allen was an Egyptologist, so he had a very clear view of the content and presentation, but he still had the unenviable task of negotiating the wishes of Hölscher, Breasted, and Nelson.

Nevertheless, Hölscher had nearly complete say over the production of his volumes. His request that the color plates and pencil drawings (which were to be reproduced by the photogravure process) be printed in Germany, and "everything else" "made in Chicago," vastly complicated the production.[145] As a result, the color plates were printed by Ganymed, an "art house" in Berlin, and the black-and-white plates by Meisenbach Riffarth and Company, also in Berlin. Meriden Gravure in Meriden, Connecticut, was responsible for preparing and printing the text pages with their photos, for which it created negatives from photos supplied by Hölscher.

Every possible problem plagued the process. First, predictably, the paper stock of the three printers did not match, nor did it match the stock that had been used for the first volumes of the Epigraphic Survey publications.§

Of the three purveyors, Ganymed was the least problematic, and it continued to produce the color

* The series Oriental Institute Publications.

† Ultimately, there were three sizes. *Excavation* I was the same size as the large Epigraphic Survey folios (*Medinet Habu* I, II, and IV), while *Excavation* II–V were smaller than the smaller Epigraphic Survey volumes (*Medinet Habu* III, V–VIII).

‡ Allen held the position from 1927 to 1951.

§ Adding even more woes to the publication process, the comparative tests of paper for *Excavation* I showed that the paper used for volumes I and II of the epigraphic series also lacked the desired rag content (Allen to Breasted, 7 November 1933, ISAC Museum Archives).

plates for both the excavation and the epigraphic volumes. But it too had issues, such as the paper stock, printing some plate numbers in the wrong location, and in one case printing the required legend "Printed in Germany" outside the margin, necessitating that it be reprinted in Chicago.

Meisenbach in Berlin was a real problem. The zinc plates it produced for *Excavation* I (apparently the only volume for which it supplied plates) were so poor that there was much discussion about discarding them and having them reprinted. Allen advocated for redoing the plates in the United States. In May 1934, a Mr. McFarland, the manager of the University of Chicago Press, wrote to Elizabeth Blaisdell in the Oriental Institute publications office, "I am sorry to hear that we are not going to be able to reprint the Meisenbach plates. As a result this volume is going to be a mongrel affair with three or four colors and qualities of paper and with the plate numbers printed in anything but uniform style." He added a comment that Hölscher certainly would not have appreciated: "However, I suppose this volume is of considerably less importance than the others in the series, and Dr. Breasted, of course, knows best what decision to make with reference to its final appearance."[146] It was decided to use the plates printed by Meisenbach, even if they were of poor quality.*

This snafu created some tension between Chicago and Hölscher, who after all had selected the German firms. Breasted wrote him a sympathetic letter:

> As Dr. Allen has already written you, we have decided to use the plates already printed by Meisenbach. I hope you understand that we do not hold you in any respect responsible for the treatment which we have received. . . . I consider that they treated us dishonestly and very unfairly. If they wanted to change the paper and use a paper different from that which they were contracted in honor to employ, they should have sent us a sample of the other paper which they proposed to use and have secured our consent before they used it. . . . Furthermore, they have given us a very bad job. It is one of the worst jobs of printing I have ever seen. The descriptive legends in large capitals at the foot of the plate were not backed properly. The bottom half of each line of type is clear and distinct; the upper half is frequently ragged and fuzzy. It is the kind of printing we are accustomed to here in America from the presses of provincial country printers who are incapable of producing good work. I feel very regretful about this not only for the sake of the Institute but also for your own sake. The work which you have done at Medinet Habu is a very valuable contribution to our knowledge, and I wanted it published in the best possible manner. But Meisenbach's proposals for reprinting involve us in too much additional expense, and we are unable to undertake it.[147]

So the plates, poor as they were, were used.

The process of Hölscher's doing the preliminary layout of the volume in Germany and having some parts of the book printed there, while the final layouts and other printing were done in the United States, factored greatly in the logistical nightmares, and there are many long letters about the location of plates and text. In November 1933, Allen expressed his exasperation to Breasted:

> Now for the first time we are able to put together a complete set of plates 1–34 of this volume. The result is disheartening. During the period of printing we were limited to proofs of a few plates at a time, without receiving even a duplicate set for our files, and we were so engrossed in checking the legends and descriptive matter printed in the plates that we evidently failed to get the proper perspective on the volume as a whole. Not only do the finish and color of the paper stocks used for the plates differ as

* The plates that bear the legend "Printed in Germany" are by Meisenbach. They comprise most of the thirty-seven plates in the book. The full-color renderings (pls. 23, 24, 31) are labeled "Printed in Germany by Ganymed, Berlin." The photos (pls. 35–37) were produced and printed by Meriden Gravure.

> between the two firms which prepared them, but there are also differences between the type faces used, the positions of the printed areas on the plates, and even in the facing of the plates. That is, of two successive double plates the bottom of the one is at the left edge of the volume, the other at the right. . . . From this sad experience I hope to have learned that no urge for haste shall hereafter cause this office to return to a printer any proofs a duplicate set of which has not been provided for ourselves. This situation furnishes one more good argument also for never starting to print a volume until the manuscript materials for it are all in our own hands and can be properly correlated in advance.[148]

The translation from German also posed problems. In December 1933, Hölscher reported to Allen, "I am sending you the manuscripts for the Preliminary Report for OIC* and the introduction to the [first] folio volume today by registered mail. Since Mrs. Seele is unfortunately not here, I had the translation done by an English teacher in Hildesheim, Miss Colebrook, but am not exactly satisfied with the result. I myself made a few more changes intended to make the meaning clearer." He ended optimistically, "At any rate, you will still have to polish the style of it all!"[149] Nelson had a rather different opinion, writing to Breasted, "Hoelscher has handed me the introduction to his volume of plates and has asked me to look it over. He had it translated by an English teacher in Germany with disastrous results as far as the English is concerned. I told him I was afraid it would have to be practically rewritten but he told me not to do anything with it as Allen would attend to all that. I am therefore giving it back to him without correction as to the language. . . . Hoelscher seems to be pleased with the progress he is making in the preparation of his text. I wish I could say the same."[150] The text was retranslated by Diederika Seele.

This unfortunate experience resulted in some new publication procedures, as Breasted wrote to Allen: "We shall certainly from now on make it a rule to begin no work until the complete manuscript for plates and everything else is in our hands. But unfortunately this does not rescue the spilt milk. With regard to presumably the third variety of paper that would be introduced into Hölscher's volume by us, it would be better for us to select this additional paper with a view to matching as nearly as possible at least one of the two types of paper stock used by Hölscher already."[151]

Notwithstanding all the production problems, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume I: General Plans and Views* appeared in 1934. The print run was 500 copies. The retail price, originally $14, was raised to $22 "in view of the cost of producing it."[152] Two years later, Allen discussed print runs, sales, and distribution with Hölscher:

> The experience which we have accumulated on sales of volumes already out indicates that our editions have heretofore been almost uniformly too large. As far as your own folio volume OIP XXI [*Excavation* I] is concerned, I find that its distribution to date has been as follows: 84 free copies sent out, 39 copies sold. We printed 500 copies of that volume, but apparently 300 copies would have been adequate. Since the situation is similar with regard to Dr. Nelson's volumes we expect to print only 300 copies of his next Medinet Habu volume. Would you agree with us that the same quantity would suffice in your case?[153]

By August, they compromised on a print run of 400 copies with 200 of them bound and the rest stored.[154]

When Hölscher received a copy of the book in 1934, he sent an effusive letter of thanks to Allen for his efforts:

> Now that I have the atlas volume of the Medinet Habu Excavations in hand, I would like to express my joy to you about the impression that this monumental volume makes. We may certainly contend that no excavation in Egypt has ever been published

* *Work in Western Thebes, 1931–33* (OIC 18, 1934).

> in this way. And overall, even if we adopt a more critical attitude, we can be satisfied with the result. Minor cosmetic flaws that we are aware of are in fact not as obvious as we had feared. Even the different grade of paper from Meisenbach is not that disturbing since it matches the paper of the text![155]

Excavation I contains elaborate plans that show the development of the temple from "before Ramses III" into the Roman period; the cemetery north of the temple of Aye and Horemheb; Hölscher's exacting rendering of the High Gate and the temple of Aye and Horemheb; the Small Temple; the walls; general photos of the site; aerial photos of the temple (commissioned from Imperial Airways),* and three watercolors, including Bollacher's often-reproduced color reconstruction of the facade of the First Pylon.

The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume II, 1939

The production problems continued with the next volume, *The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (OIP 41). Delays were caused by plates that were reprinted but still unsatisfactory.[156] In late March 1939, Mr. Bishop at the University of Chicago Press grimly reported to the Oriental Institute, "Mr. Bauman [of the University of Chicago Press] and I discussed the Hölscher Book with the Denson brothers this morning, and their recommendation was that the entire job should be remade and reprinted. They have agreed to do this at their expense, therefore, all working material has been returned to The Illinois Photogravure Company."[157] The text, which was much more extensive than that in volume I, was again translated by Diederika Seele.

Excavation II, like the volumes that followed it, and even the preliminary reports in the OIC series, included few views of the excavation in process, a disappointing omission to later scholars. This choice was deliberate, as Hölscher wrote to Breasted: "My opinion is that as few as possible photographs of the actual excavation itself should be provided, since they are actually only required where the drawing does not make the finding clear enough in order to enable a critical review."[158] In his focus on architecture, he failed to appreciate interest in the excavation techniques and images of its progress.

The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume III, 1941

Hölscher attempted to speed up the appearance of *Excavation* III (*The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part I*, OIP 54), even suggesting to John Wilson in late 1937 that it bypass the translation process and be published in German: "I would like to take this opportunity to yet again urge that the work be published in German. . . . You yourself know, of course, that the translation of the Second Volume into English has now already lasted more than three years, and that the date for handing it over to the press can still not be envisioned with certainty. If, in contrast, no translation and no changes on the part of the editor were made, then the publication of Volumes I–IV could certainly be out in print in the summer of 1939."[159] Several weeks later, Wilson replied, "Because the series has been started in English, I feel that we must continue in that language. If the first volume had been published in German, there would be no question that we would continue."[160] *Excavation* III appeared in 1941, and there is not as much correspondence about its production, suggesting it went more smoothly. Diederika Seele again translated the text.

* Hölscher wanted aerial images of the temple, but their estimated cost from the Royal Air Force or the Egyptian Survey Department (£E200) was judged too expensive. In March 1933, when the University of Chicago began making *The Human Adventure* (produced by Charles Breasted), it needed aerial footage, and it commissioned Imperial Airways to undertake three days of filming over Luxor (in addition to other sites). The cost (£E700) was shared by the Survey and the film. The photos included the stills for Hölscher's publication and the often-published view of Chicago House (Breasted to Nelson, 3 March 1933, CHP 1177/1410; Breasted to Nelson, 7 March 1933, CHP 1181/1415; Breasted to Nelson, 6 April 1933, CHP 1420).

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Figure 4.16. Unpublished rendering of the Eastern High Gate and enclosure walls, from the southeast, by Laurence Woolman. Image: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume IV, 1951

The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part II (OIP 55) was delayed by the partial or complete destruction* of field notes and drawings in the bombing of Hanover and Berlin during World War II. There was understandable confusion about what had truly been destroyed. In July 1946, Hölscher reported to Wilson, "Although the original drawings of Volume IV of the Medinet Habu Excavations had been heavily damaged when the Technical University of Hanover was destroyed, I repaired them or, respectively, made them over again during half a year's work, so that they are here packed and ready to be shipped."[161] Later that year, Allen inquired, "I understand that all the negatives which you had planned to send us for use in Volume IV are lost. Do you know whether any good prints were kept at Luxor? If not, shall we use the prints on the dummy plates, except for objects which are in Chicago and can be photographed?"[162]

Laurence Woolman's architectural renderings of the Eastern High Gate were also apparently thought to be lost in the war. Woolman replaced Harald Hanson on the Architectural Survey for the 1930 season, and he was charged with drawing the gate. Although he produced twenty elevations (fig. 4.16), cross-sections, and plans, none of them appeared in the final publication. The organization of Woolman's drawings and the published plates is

* Hölscher commented to T. G. Allen, publication secretary of the Oriental Institute: "As you know, the drawings for my Volume IV of the Excavations of Medinet Habu had been destroyed during the war as a result of air raids on the Technical University. I succeeded, however, in reproducing most of the drawings based on photographs and other documents that had been preserved" (Hölscher to Allen, 31 July 1948, ISAC Museum Archives). This statement seems at odds with an earlier report that the drawings had been "heavily damaged" (Hölscher to Wilson, 15 July 1946, ISAC Museum Archives).

the same. For example, plate 6 shows the east and west elevations, as does the corresponding Woolman drawing,* suggesting that Hölscher had specified the subject matter of each plate (figs. 4.17 and 4.18).

Comparing Woolman's drawings with those in the publication—none of which are credited—shows the Woolman renderings to be more detailed and stylish, with use of high contrast to show the reliefs on the walls (fig. 4.17). They also differ from the published drawings in that Woolman showed the state of the gate in 1930, rather than reconstructing the structure as shown in the publication. For example, plate 7 does not show the intrusion on the gate by the Roman court and wall shown by Woolman (fig. 4.19), and Woolman included the modern staircase on the southwest side of the gate that is omitted in the published plate. Overall, the published plates are less detailed. The Woolman drawings apparently were sent to Hölscher in Germany, and they too were destroyed, or lost, and hence Hölscher (or an unnamed assistant) "made them over again" apparently without checking whether Woolman had copies. As it turned out, Woolman had kept personal copies and negatives of his work on the High Gate.†

Plate 3 of the volume, a reconstruction of the High Gate, is attributed to Walter Lüns, who is otherwise not mentioned in the publication or in the excavation diaries. He worked for Hölscher from June to September 1930 while the excavator was in Germany.‡

Another issue with *Excavation* IV was whether it should contain the blocks from the mortuary chapel of Paser. Of both architectural and epigraphic interest, the blocks were excavated from the ruins of the Western High Gate, studied by Siegfried Schott, and drawn by Bollacher. In some ways, their proposed inclusion in *Excavation* IV would seem an odd decision, since the subject matter—festival scenes—is more closely related to the scenes in the Second Court documented by the Epigraphic Survey. But perhaps because they were excavated, they were considered to be under Hölscher's purview.

Their publication faced the same hurdles as the rest of *Excavation* IV, because, as Hölscher wrote to Allen in 1948, "The drawings of the reliefs from the tomb of Paser, which Bollacher had drawn and whereof the originals were in my possession, were utterly destroyed without my having rescued copies of them. As a consequence, I asked Dr. Schott, who was editing the reliefs, whether or not he still had copies, but learned from him, who was serving in the military at the time, that he, too, had nothing in his possession. I therefore had to omit these reliefs from my Volume V§ and leave them to be published at a later time."[163]

Hölscher reported an early instance of matter thought lost in the war on June 22, 1948: "A short time ago, then, Dr. Schott wrote me to my great surprise that he had found photocopies of the reliefs [of Paser] among his things in Heidelberg and could therefore quickly finish the editing that had already begun earlier. The only thing involved is to prepare the drawings anew on the basis of the existing blueprints."[164] He noted, "We must now have the reliefs redrawn, and Schott supposedly has a suitable draftsman available. Schott will then supply everything ready for publication by September. This is very significant and important for our publication because the reliefs provide a great deal of

* Preserved in the Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

† Woolman died in 1944. Prints and 8″ × 10″ negatives of his work on the High Gate that his wife, Janet, had preserved were donated to the Oriental Institute archives in 2016 by his son David.

‡ I thank Christian Loeben for this information (personal comm., April 17, 2023). Lüns later became the *Kreisoberbaurat* (chief-architect-counselor) for the town of Spexard.

§ As will be detailed later, at the time, Hölscher's volume V was to have concerned objects related to the structures that he excavated, as opposed to volume VI, devoted to objects "that had been found more or less randomly" (Hölscher to Hauser, 22 April 1948).

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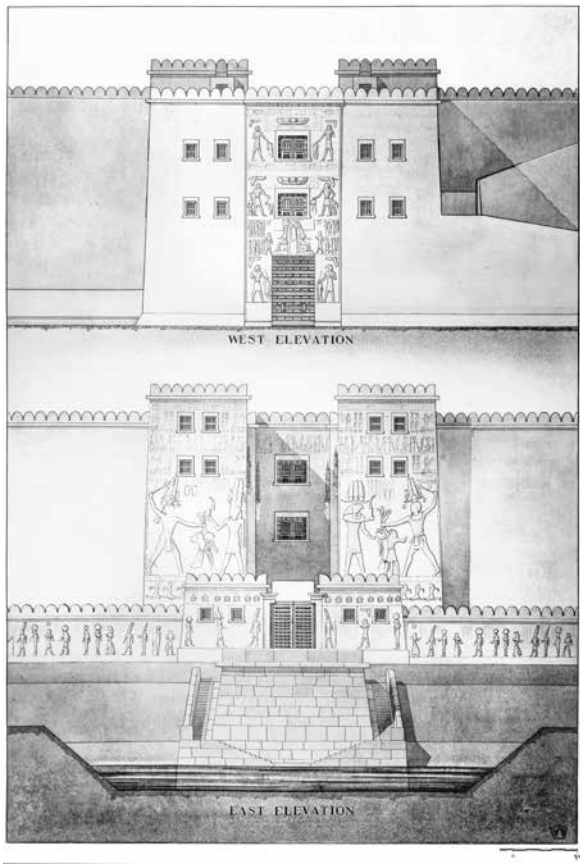

Figure 4.17. Laurence Woolman's unpublished drawing of the west and east elevations of the Eastern High Gate. Image: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

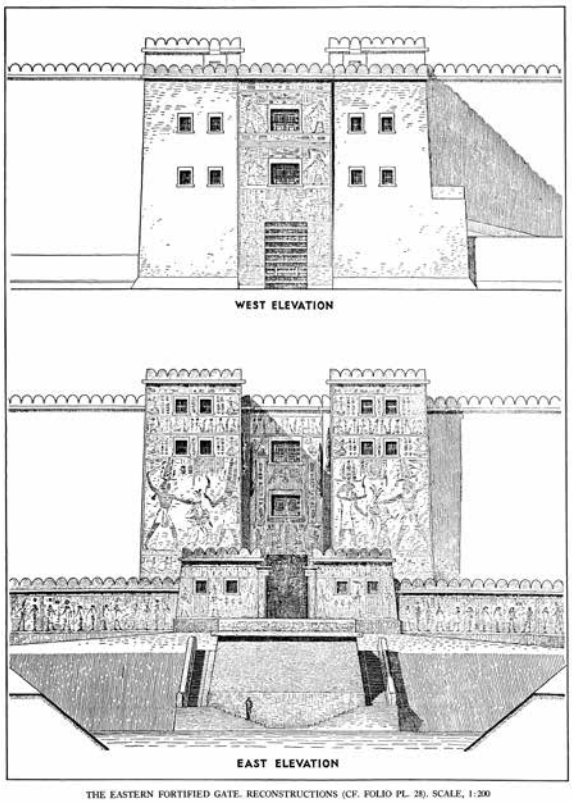

Figure 4.18. Published drawing of the west and east elevations of the Eastern High Gate. *Excavation* IV, pl. 6.

information regarding the question of the cult in the Temple of Medinet Habu."[165]

Excavation IV was finalized without the section on Paser, but considerable correspondence documents the discussions of how Schott's work was eventually to be published. Elizabeth Hauser, who in 1951* succeeded Allen as managing editor of Oriental Institute publications, and who translated Schott's manuscript, discussed options with Hölscher, initially suggesting to him in March 1949 that the Paser material appear in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*:

> Now as to the Schott article. I have a translation almost ready to send him, except for typing. I found his German most difficult to understand, but I think I now have his ideas pretty well in mind, although that will remain for him to decide. We were greatly disappointed in the new drawings, since the artist, through no fault of his own, obviously does not have feeling for Egyptian art. But aside from that, a lot of work on them will be required to bring out the outlines of the individual blocks, as you suggested should be done. So that it

* Hauser held the position until 1968. Before 1951, she assisted Allen with publications, and she was very involved in the production of the Hölscher volumes. Being either fluent in German or a native speaker, she dealt with much of Hölscher's correspondence with the Oriental Institute, and she translated the text for *Excavation* IV and V. As noted in "Hölscher and the Oriental Institute after 1936" earlier in this chapter, she also did much to assist Hölscher and Anthes during the war.

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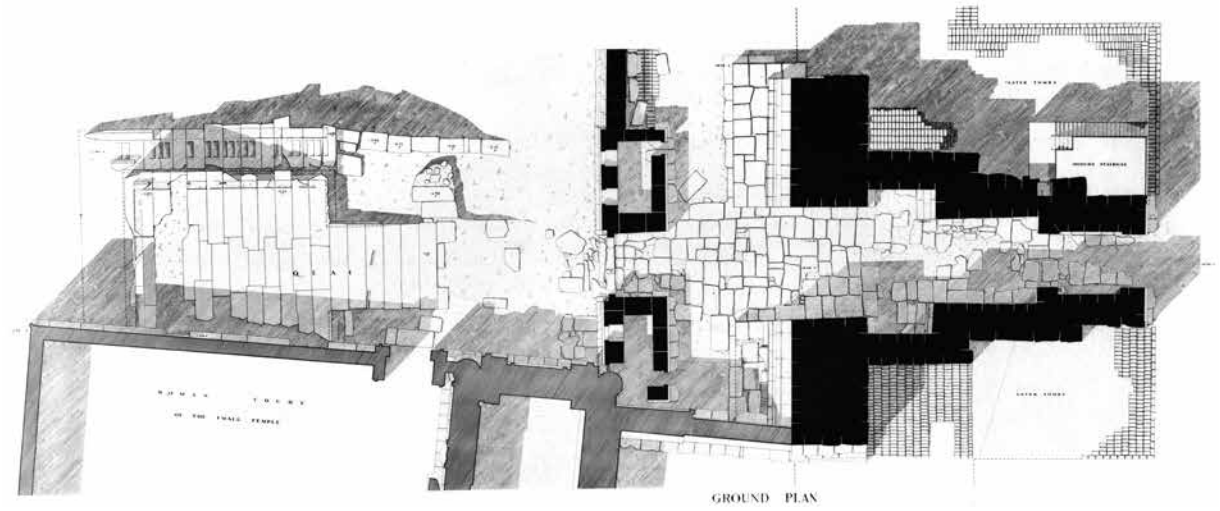

Figure 4.19. Woolman's unpublished plan of the ground floor of the west face of the Eastern High Gate, showing the proximity of the Roman Court (at lower left). The High Gate as published in *Excavation* IV, pl. 7, did not show the court's intrusion. Image: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

> will be sometime before the article will be ready for the printer, and we hesitate to delay Volume IV any longer. I was discussing the problem with Professor Seele, and he suggested publishing the article in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, of which he is now the editor. There are several reasons why this seems to me an excellent suggestion. (1) The drawings are not up to the usual standard of our OIPs, especially of the illustrations in your volumes. (2) The subject matter is not very well suited to an architectural survey, since it is actually treated by an epigrapher. The material is very important and will be more easily available to scholars in a journal than in an expensive OIP. Also Schott would receive twenty-five reprints. (3) It would appear in the issue of April, 1950, which seems a long way in the future, but actually your volume IV will probably not be printed by that time, since we always have so much difficulty with collotypes. (4) As I mentioned above, I do not think Volume IV should be delayed any longer.[166]

But in the following month, the plan changed, and Hauser wrote to Hölscher: "A few days ago Mr. Seele regretfully informed me that he will not be able to publish Schott's article in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. So we will have to include it in your Volume IV, as originally planned, in spite of the fact that the drawings are not as good as we would like to have them."[167] By September, the plan changed yet again when George Hughes checked the manuscript and suggested a number of necessary revisions. Again to avoid delaying Hölscher's volume, Paser was omitted from it,[168] a decision about which Hölscher replied, "I therefore agree that Schott's contribution be printed in revised form somewhere else. Hopefully, Dr. Schott will not be all too sad about this!"[169]

Additional delays in the appearance of *Excavation* IV (and V) were created by the difficulty—in some cases, the impossibility—of Hölscher's sending his text and photos from Germany to Chicago in the postwar years.[170] In 1946 and 1947, the Oriental Institute searched for a way to circumvent the shipping restrictions. Oriental Institute director Thorkild Jacobsen suggested that Keith Seele, who was in Europe, visit Hölscher in Hanover and carry the documents to Chicago by hand,[171] and John Wilson tried to use his connections with the State Department to send the documents via

pouch, but neither plan came to fruition. Finally, Hölscher reported that "the American liaison officer of the local military government" had taken the manuscript for *Excavation* V to Bremen "in order to personally deliver it there for shipment to Chicago. Hopefully, it will now arrive in your hands without delay. . . . I shall attempt to also send the illustrations for Volumes IV and V via the same route."[172]

As with previous volumes, the translation also created delays. *Excavation* IV had text by both Hölscher and Anthes translated by Elizabeth Hauser. It did not go smoothly. Anthes complained to Wilson:

> Namely, the English text was not a translation but often only an approximate summary of my manuscript, with omissions and additions. . . . But I fear that she misunderstood her job. Often, she was indeed not in agreement with my treatment and thereby lost sight of a basic rule of every evaluation, namely that the author of the ms. had in fact thought about everything that he wrote! In fact, however, she should not assume a critical position regarding my work and "improve" it but reproduce the text as carefully as possible. . . . But it is definitely not cricket that the translator simply works her own observations into my text; rather, such observations must be undertaken by an Egyptologist, who can accept responsibility for them, and I must be separately informed of them so that I can make the decision about their significance and incorporate them into the text as warranted.[173]

Anthes further expressed his unhappiness about working with Hauser rather than with Diederika Seele: "At any rate, I have now had to redo the entire work, whereby my original version—apart, however, from a few isolated errors—proved correct and far better than the English rendering. I have now written the text in English and incorporated Mrs. Hauser's additions, insofar as I find them important and suitable."[174]

The delay in the publication of *Excavation* IV led the seemingly ever-sympathetic and patient Hauser to write to the University of Chicago Press: "We said we would like to put this volume ahead of De Buck's [Coffin Texts] Volume IV, because Professor Hoelscher is so old and has been waiting so long for the publication of his last two volumes (IV–V)."[175] When *Excavation* IV, *The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part II* (OIP 55) was finally published in 1951 (the same year as de Buck's *Coffin Texts* IV), a grateful Hölscher acknowledged receipt of his five copies in December, writing to Hauser: "I do not wish to fail to tell you what an excellent impression this volume, too, again makes, and how grateful I am to you for all the care and all the effort you expended in editing the volume. . . . I am very glad and grateful about the overall result."[176]

The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume V, 1954, and the Fate of Volume VI

In late 1937, there was still indecision about how many additional volumes would appear and their contents.* Initially, two more volumes were anticipated, one on the post-Ramesside remains and another on the artifacts. Hölscher divided the small objects into two categories. The first included those that related specifically to the structures and phases he excavated. Hölscher published that material in *Excavation* V. The second, the responsibility of Anthes, consisted of "objects that had been found without any particular relationships to any structures or building levels, i.e., had been found more or less randomly in Medinet Habu and were therefore not incorporated into my systematic treatment of the excavations" and would be *Excavation* VI.[177]

There was definite interest in the objects and how they would be presented. In 1931, Nelson

* Hölscher wrote rather pessimistically to Wilson, "The only thing then remaining would be the question as to whether Volume V 'Late Period' and Volume VI 'Individual Finds' should be subsequently prepared or foregone" (3 September 1937, ISAC Museum Archives).

asked Breasted what level of detail he desired: "Are they to be published in good photographs with necessary field notes, or are they to be exhaustively published and discussed? I do not know what your desire in this matter may be."[178] The issue was not yet resolved in 1939 when Wilson wrote to Hölscher: "Until we are certain about the extent of Volume V, we shall not give a final answer as to whether it should include the discussion of individual finds to be prepared by Dr. Anthes. My feeling is that this proposal is correct and that Volume V should contain this section. We shall withhold final decision until you have had an opportunity to work on the volume."[179]

But the whole issue of the publication of the small finds changed as a result of the destruction of many records that documented the material. There was confusion about what had been destroyed and what had been moved to safety, and records that were assumed to be destroyed reappeared, some as late as in the 1990s. Wilson supported the idea of doing a fuller account of the objects, alluding to a discussion that new photography of the objects in Chicago could be commissioned for the publication.[180]

But Anthes's catalog, the proposed *Excavation* VI, was ultimately halted by the presumed destruction of the documentation. As Hölscher reported to Wilson, "Dr. Anthes, too, had progressed rather far with his preparations and, when Berlin was bombed, had moved his material together with treasures of the Berlin Museum out of the city to bomb-proof locations. There, however, everything fell victim to plundering and, insofar as we know, was utterly destroyed. Precise documentation has not yet been available from the Russian Zone. At any rate, it is certain that Dr. Anthes, who is currently the commissarial director of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, will not be able to produce the editing of the individual finds of Medinet Habu."[181] But Hölscher held out hope that they would eventually be published: "I hope that these 'objects' can be edited in Cairo and in Chicago at some later time by one of the members of the O.I."[182] It was finally decided that *Excavation* V would be the last in the series.

Hölscher moved ahead with the text for *Excavation* V (*Post-Ramessid Remains*, OIP 66), which appeared in 1954. To write the section on the objects relevant to that volume, he needed documents that had survived in Chicago and Luxor, resulting in numerous and very time-consuming requests. Locating these records mostly fell to Hauser, who wrote, "Just the other day I received a letter from Professor Hölscher that he wished to add a brief catalogue of certain objects to Volume V, as I believe he wrote you. For this he needs find-lists and photographs which are in Chicago. Before we can send him the photographs we must have duplicate prints made, which means further delay because our photographer is overloaded with work."[183] This necessity led to the excavation records being duplicated on microfilm and duplicate photo prints being made. Some of the photos had to be copied from negatives in Luxor.[184] Hölscher wrote to Wilson of his plan for *Excavation* V:

> It is especially fateful that the principal copy of the find lists and a large part of the photography (films and prints) were lost at the same time. Before I handed over the material, however, I had luckily made handwritten copies of the find lists from which only the notes of Anthes about hieroglyphic inscriptions and similar notes from him are missing. Due to the elimination of the contribution from Anthes, I have felt compelled to expand the architectural treatment and the report about the excavation results to such an extent that most of the individual finds are also covered. The only things I shall not be handling are the objects that have no direct relationship to Medinet Habu and its individual strata since I lack the documentation for these. On the other hand, I have systematically discussed the pottery, lamps, seals and the like. I thus believe the Volume V—even in this altered form—will form a complete whole and the material

> conclusion of the excavation publication. The editing of the individual finds, stelae, statues, fragments and the like can be undertaken later by someone else on the basis of the objects in the museums of Chicago and Cairo.—I, by the way, have a listing with inventory numbers of all objects that went to the Cairo Museum.[185]

Hölscher's text covered the destruction of the temple and the later reuse of the site through the Ptolemaic and Roman eras into the Coptic period. The introductory text to Section II, "The Objects," advises the reader: "The statues, reliefs, inscriptions, scarabs, jewelry, and domestic articles which reached Medinet Habu by accident have for the most part been omitted, since the pictures and data concerning them together with a discussion by Dr. R. Anthes were lost during the war."[186]

Despite the difficulty of producing an English translation of Hölscher's text, Hauser was ever gracious. On the eve of the publication of that last volume, she wrote to Hölscher, "I am sorry that your Medinet Habu volumes will be finished when Volume V comes out, because I have enjoyed working on them and with you. But I am sure you are overjoyed at the prospect of having the publication of Medinet Habu completed after so many delays."[187]

In the nearly twenty-year interval between the artifacts arriving in Chicago and the publication of *Excavation* V, other scholars understandably began to express interest in publishing certain objects that Hölscher or Anthes intended to publish. When Miriam Lichtheim, who worked as a research assistant in the Oriental Institute Museum from 1944 to 1948,[188] applied for permission to publish the fragmentary statue of Akhamenru,* Hölscher graciously replied, "I would be quite delighted about further discussion and a more detailed publication by Dr. Lichtheim. I also do not hesitate to state the same thing for the other individual finds. I would merely like to ask that—as long as my manuscript remains unpublished—I be informed in advance about any item that relates to the excavation objects of Medinet Habu.[189]

In more recent years, with the recovery of the excavation records, a great number of the objects from Medinet Habu have been published in articles and catalogs raisonnés.[190]

Publication of the Excavated Ostraca

In the course of the excavation, more than 4,500 ostraca—mainly Demotic, Coptic, and Greek, with a few in hieratic—were excavated.[191] Although it was recognized that the material was important, it was not a priority, and surprisingly, Breasted expressed little interest: "I don't seem to be able to work up very much enthusiasm about this later stuff, but if completely worked through I am sure that it would not be all chaff."[192] The ostraca were stored at Chicago House in Luxor to be photographed and to allow any researchers to use the library while they worked on the texts.[193]

Hölscher initially arranged for scholar Carl Schmidt to look at the material while in Luxor and to identify items of special interest and make recommendations for their study and publication. Hölscher assured Breasted that he was not overstepping his authority:

> I made it utterly clear to him that this dare not be a matter of any kind of editing or publication of even a preliminary nature but merely personal information for the excavator. The work would be initiated later proceeding from Chicago. Schmidt was very interested in this and readily promised me his help for a few days. But if he doesn't come to Luxor this year, he recommended that I ask Dr. Till from Vienna to look at the ostraca since he will be coming to Egypt during the coming

* ISACM E14284 in *Excavation* V, 28–29, fig. 32; published five years before *Excavation* V appeared in M. Lichtheim, "The High Steward Akhamenru," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7, no. 3 (1948): 163–79.

> year on a German fellowship and is said to be very familiar with Coptic. I hope that this might be amenable to you."[194]

At the time, there were few Egyptian scholars who specialized in Coptic, so the ostraca needed to be studied by specialists outside the country. By the end of the year, Schmidt decided he was too busy to undertake the survey, and he suggested that Walter Till in Vienna be contracted to do the Coptic and his colleague Hans Gerstinger, custodian of the Greek section of the National Library in Vienna, handle the Greek, the two working together in their hometown. The costs of contracting with Till were prohibitive, however, and in May 1930, Breasted wrote:

> It would be quite out of the question to devote a matter of $13,000 to $14,000 to the publication of the Coptic and Greek ostraca. . . . Such material has a certain importance, but the sum total of the scientific gleanings which might result from these documents, as contrasted with our Medinet Habu folios, could not possibly justify any such investment. You can count on the fingers of one hand the specialists who would use these ostraca, and I am therefore obliged to write Till that we shall give the matter up. I am inclined to think that these gentlemen have gained the impression that we have endless funds.[195]

Another solution was closer to home—having the staff and faculty of the Oriental Institute work on them—so Breasted wrote to Hölscher, "With regard to the ostraca, I think that probably Edgerton and Wilson could take care of the hieratic and Demotic. But just what we may be able to do with the Coptic and the Greek ostraca I do not know."[196] In March 1935 the university arranged with Lacau for permission to export the ostraca. Five crates containing "over 4,500 pieces" went to Chicago, with a few examples going directly to Cairo. Nelson gave further details:

> The ostraca are packed as well as we could think of. Miss Belknap [Nelson's secretary] did the entire job and deserves commendation for having put through a very unpleasant piece of work. Every ostracon had to be numbered. Most of them were already thus numbered but not by any means all of them. Then a considerable number remained to be photographed. After that the numbers had to be entered on copies of each photo, one for the Museum in Cairo and one for Chicago. When the boxes were packed, lists had to be made showing just which ostraca were in any given box, just which boxes in each layer of each large case. It was no small job. We have forwarded this season only ostraca from the dig. There still remain a large number bought by Edgerton either for himself or for the Institute which must await a more convenient season or till someone from Chicago comes out and attends to them.[197]

John Wilson reminded the Oriental Institute Museum, "Medinet Habu ostraca are property of Egyptian government. On loan to Or. Inst. for study purposes. Not to be accessioned. After study is completed there may be a division."[198]

The ostraca became an issue later, when the Egyptian government passed a regulation "that no new concession can be granted until the institution has returned any and all objects which they may have on loan from the Egyptian government."[199] According to Labib Habachi, the Antiquities Service was very aware of this loan because "the matter came up in connection with any clearing of Kheruef's tomb." George Hughes and Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling were concerned that the outstanding loan would also have repercussions for the epigraphic work, and they suggested "that unless direly necessary none of the ostraca should be kept."[200] Thousands of them were returned to Egypt in October 1950 and October 1953.[201]

It was years until the publication of the ostraca appeared. Elizabeth Stefanski worked on the material for many years and had nearly completed the manuscript when she died in 1948. In 1950, the

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unfinished manuscript was transferred to Miriam Lichtheim, and in 1952, *Coptic Ostraca from Medinet Habu* (OIP 71), with Elizabeth Stefanski and Miriam Lichtheim as authors, appeared.[202] It was followed in 1957 by *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu* (OIP 80), also by Miriam Lichtheim. More recent years have seen individual ostraca published by many different scholars.[203]

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5 The Move to Karnak, 1930–

Work at Karnak (fig. 5.1) was part of James Breasted's original aspiration for the scope of the work as outlined to Nelson in 1924, and he was encouraged by a letter that Maurice Pillet, the chief of works at Karnak,* had written to Egyptologist Alan Gardiner "stating that there were many inscriptions in Karnak which were daily perishing, and expressing his readiness to put up scaffolding or otherwise help anyone wishing to copy inscriptions there. This note of Pillet's has brought me to a definite decision regarding the future work of the Oriental Institute."[1] In 1926, only two years after beginning the enormous project at Medinet Habu, Breasted began discussions with Nelson about how to proceed at Karnak.[2]

Charles Breasted was aggressive about what Chicago hoped to do at Karnak, writing of "doing the whole temple."[3] Nelson commented, "We are very anxious to preserve the portions of Karnak that are most in danger and that are disappearing rapidly year by year. If we could get a concession from the Government for Karnak to begin next winter, we might put Bollacher on the job of recording the portions of the temple most in need of immediate attention."† In April 1929, Nelson met with Henri Chevrier, the director of works for the Egyptian Antiquities Service at Karnak, who showed him "all over his work at Karnak and also drove us around to the Amenhotep IV Temple behind it." Chevrier "spoke feelingly of the efforts he was making to carry on the engineering work in the Amon Temple and publish the Khonsu Temple at the same time. It was apparent to me that he had in mind all the time that I might say a good word for him, that would produce some funds to give him assistance." But the work did not impress

Epigraphers and artists documenting the reliefs on the architraves in the Court of the Khonsu Temple, ca. 1971. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

* Maurice Pillet was chief of works at Karnak from 1920 to 1925.

† Nelson to C. Breasted, 24 February 1929, ISAC Museum Archives. This reference to Alfred Bollacher working solo at Karnak was part of Nelson's proposed solution to his disruption of daily life at Chicago House. Nelson suggested that rather than lose the very skilled artist, Bollacher could live at the Savoy Hotel and work on the east bank. See further in "Life at the Old Chicago House" in chapter 11.

Figure 5.1. Karnak Temple, looking east through the First Court toward the Hypostyle Hall, with the temple of Ramesses III to the right, 1958. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Nelson, and he wrote to Breasted, "It is unfortunate that the publication work is being carried on by one who knows no hieroglyph [*sic*] and who is, apparently, not really a competent Egyptian architect." He further commented on errors in Chevrier's recent publication of the texts on the White Chapel of Senwosert I[4] and used those errors as further justification for Chicago to work at Karnak: "They furnish a sufficient argument, it seems to me, for our being allowed to undertake the publishing of Karnak."[5]

In September 1929, Breasted and Nelson spoke with Henri Gauthier of the Service des Antiquités in Cairo about working at Karnak. The request was met with general acceptance, but with limits. First, Gauthier stipulated that they could not expect to do a full publication of the complex, but they (and others) were free to republish the reliefs and inscriptions that were known before the work of Georges Legrain* in 1898, thereby blocking them from working on newly discovered parts of the temple yet to be published by the French. Second, they were asked to present a work plan so the Chicago team would not be working in the same area as the French; and third, they would not be permitted to do any excavation, as they were then doing at Medinet Habu.[6] Breasted was still optimistic and believed "that patience and adroit diplomacy will eventually win us the scientific privileges the Institute would like to secure in order to do justice to the work at Karnak."[7]

Nelson wrote to Breasted, "I am now going ahead to draw up a scheme of our proposed work,"[8] informing him that

> I have sent him [Pierre Lacau, director of the Service des Antiquités] a blueprint,† made from an enlargement from the map in Baedeker inclosing in red line the Ramses III temple and the Bubastite Gate, both of which he told me we could publish, and also all the temple east of the Amenhotep III pylon, and the outer walls of the hypostyle hall as the areas in which we should like to be allowed to work. Lacau also told me that we could work in the southern extension of the temple, except for certain small sections that were included in Legrain's papers that are now about to be published, I understand. Once

* Georges Legrain, the head of French excavations at Karnak, 1895–1917.

† This original document has not been found.

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> they are published, we ought to be freed from such prohibitions. There is enough free area to keep us busy for years to come.[9]

He continued, "I gathered that we could do much more at Karnak than we thought would at first be allowed. If we once begin to publish there, it will be difficult for him to cut out small bits of inscriptions or relief here and there, as he now proposes to do, and prohibit our publication of such texts. It would not look well if 'Withheld from publication by the Service des Antiquites' or words to that effect, were to appear at intervals on our plans location [*sic*] the parts we did publish."[10] And as for the prohibition on excavation at Karnak, Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "I think that ultimately, we may be able to do the architectural* job as well as the epigraphic at that site [Karnak]."[11]

Lacau (see fig. 4.3 in chapter 4) was not as enthusiastic as Gauthier about Chicago's working at Karnak. He was suspicious about the ambitions of the brash and well-funded Americans, and their requests for monuments in addition to the enormous complex at Medinet Habu only confirmed his concerns. Breasted wrote to Nelson, "The intrusion of an American institution with the men and the money to publish these great monuments of primary importance evidently rankles. He [Lacau] expresses himself in the typical bureaucratic French manner and I think takes the greatest pleasure in his power of disposing of such rights."[12] Breasted and Nelson anticipated further resistance from Lacau, the former writing, "The longer we can push off the inevitable struggle with Lacau regarding our right to work in Karnak the better. I think he is taking ample rope to hang himself. . . . I should hate to undertake the job, but he wouldn't be the first Frenchman who has been thrown out."[13] The Chicago team was apparently so self-assured about working wherever they wished at Karnak that they considered Lacau, not themselves, to be vulnerable.

* "Architectural" work necessitated excavation to expose the buried structure.

Lacau had good reasons for his reticence about Chicago. Its requests for the Karnak concession came at a time when the memory of the Breasted-led, Rockefeller-funded project to build a new museum in Cairo (fig. 5.2—a project that has been characterized as "imperial overreach"[14]) was still fresh. That 1925 proposal, referred to in some of Breasted's letters as the "Grand Idea," contained the stipulation that the vast museum campus be run by an international committee for ten years before being turned over to Egyptian control.[15] This notion clashed with a rise in nationalism and the aspirations of Egyptian scholars to control their own cultural heritage. In addition, the highly publicized lawsuit between the government and Howard Carter, who represented the estate of Carnarvon in 1924 and 1925 over the disposition of objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun, still lingered, the central issue again being what rights foreigners had over the control of Egypt's cultural heritage.†

Another point of friction with Lacau at that time was Breasted's request to build a larger, obviously permanent, Chicago House in Luxor (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–"), which was viewed as another symbol of Chicago's attempts to dominate fieldwork in the Luxor area. But a bigger problem was presented by Chicago's simultaneous applications for work at Karnak and at most of the major Old Kingdom mastabas at Saqqara (see chapter 9, "Sakkarah [Memphis] Expedition, 1930–1936"), which was viewed unfavorably by the Egyptians and also by European colleagues, including archaeologists Cecil Firth and James Quibell. Further, Karnak had traditionally been the domain of the French, and Lacau himself was French, making him doubly defensive of the government's rights as well as of French interests.

† For the legal conflict, see J. Thompson, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2018), vol. 3, 62–70, esp. 69 on Breasted's being approached about finishing the clearance of the tomb, an offer he declined. See also C. Breasted, *Pioneer to the Past: The Story of James Henry Breasted, Archaeologist* (New York: Scribner's, 1943), 371.

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Figure 5.2. Rendering of the proposed museum (right) and research center (left) in Cairo by William Walcott, after a design by Wells Bosworth, 1925. Collection of E. Teeter.

On top of these problems, the Epigraphic Survey had been working in western Thebes since 1924, had quadrupled the size of its dig house and its staff, and had added an excavation component to its original epigraphic mission, but it had yet to issue a single final publication.* Charles Breasted reported to Nelson a meeting with Lacau: "He again stressed publication and I offered him again the explanation for the delay of the appearance of Medinet Habu vol. 1."† Breasted surmised that Lacau's insistence that Chicago issue a final report before additional work was undertaken was exacerbated by "the fact that our Nubia publication never appeared"‡ and that "once this volume [*Medinet Habu* I] has appeared, I do not think there will be any apprehensions on the part of the Service."[16]

Lacau's apparent reservations about allowing Chicago to work at Karnak are evident in his request that they not broadly announce it, only reinforcing the impression that granting the concession would be unpopular in some circles. Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted in July 1930, "You will notice that Lacau, in his letter to me on the Karnak business, emphasized the necessity of refraining from any announcement that we are to publish Karnak.

* The first field report in the Oriental Institute Communications series appeared in 1929 (OIC 5). A copy of *Medinet Habu* I was delivered to the Antiquities Ministry in July 1930, the same month the concession for Karnak was issued (Nelson to Breasted, 3 July 1930, CHP 69).

† C. Breasted to Nelson, 4 December 1929, CHP 354. The reasons for the delay are not given, but there is a reference to them being the "same as last year," not a good sign of Chicago's progress.

‡ A reference to Breasted's 1905–7 expedition to Egypt and Sudan, reports on which appeared only as lengthy articles in *AJSLL* 23, no. 1 (October 1906): 1–64; and *AJSLL* 25, no. 1 (October 1908): 1–110.

I quite agree with him in his request. Please do not, if it is possible, mention the Karnak matter in any way in the circulars or publications of the Institute. It will probably be some time before we can publish anything from Karnak, and I would like to avoid publicity followed by a long wait, as much as possible."[17] The phrase "we are to publish Karnak" only echoed Lacau's fears of Chicago's ambitions. Earlier that month, Nelson had advised, "We must walk daintily in this Karnak matter. In fact, I think it would be best if nothing at all were said about our plans for activities in that order."[18] But Charles Breasted, even after being cautioned against speaking about the project, wrote to Nelson, "Last year, I believe we did mention to a few people that we hoped to work at Karnak and that this has influenced us in building our permanent headquarters on the east bank of the Nile."[19] This sort of talk must have annoyed Lacau.

Chicago's expansion to Karnak did have support in some circles. Breasted noted, "You will be interested to know that I have received a letter from Engelbach* dated November 21st, 'With regard to the former [*Medinet Habu* I], I have always considered that publishing known monuments is infinitely more important than digging up new ones, and I do so hope that you will tackle Luxor Temple and those of Karnak in the same way as you have Medinet Habu.'"[20]

Charles Breasted met with Lacau on March 27, 1930, to discuss the possibility of Chicago's receiving a permit to work at Karnak. A few days later, Nelson wrote to the elder Breasted, quoting from a letter he had received from Charles:

> "During my interview with Lacau this morning, he took up with me the question of the extension of our Epigraphic work to Karnak and indicated to me what he expected to write to you regarding the portion of the temple he feels free to allot us. I dare say you will be annoyed at some of his reservations, but on the whole we shall be granted enough to keep us busy for a very long period of years during which many changes are sure to take place. Unless therefore he proposes something which from your point of view is utterly impossible, I should think it would be wiser to accept his layout without much argument."[21]

As Nelson recounted, the younger Breasted had agreed to Lacau's limits, but Charles noted, "there will undoubtedly be enough left to keep us busy for some time, and if we begin to publish the temple and do it up thoroughly as far as we go I do not believe that we can be prevented from completing it. At any rate, I do not anticipate that the situation will be one that we cannot accept."[22]

Although they had been informed of the limits of where they could work, Breasted and Nelson still looked to the future and laid plans for an ambitious campaign. In March 1930, Breasted wrote to the field director, "I have been especially interested in your proposed estimate of the number of plates necessary for the complete publication of Médinet Habu. It would be very useful if we were to lay out the entire temple of Karnak in the same way."[23] In fact, both men expressed an astounding sense of entitlement to work wherever they wanted. As noted, Breasted explicitly referred to "our right to work in Karnak,"[24] but they were entirely dependent on Lacau for their future. Despite the differences between the two camps, Breasted and Nelson respected Lacau, and on occasion attributed his resistance to the extension of their work not to personal animus but to his having to serve and placate his own Egyptian superiors and other colleagues, Nelson stating, "When handled with care, he's not absolutely unreasonable."[25] The following year, he elaborated on Chicago's relationship with Lacau:

> Winlock† maintains that Lacau is not really hostile to the work we or others are doing but that he

* Reginald Engelbach, assistant and later keeper at the Egyptian Museum, 1924–41.

† Herbert E. Winlock, who excavated in Thebes and other sites in Egypt for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1906–13

> is afraid. He says Lacau is a very timid man and since there is no job open for him in France, he is doing his best to hold on to his present position. He is unwilling to commit himself but in the end he comes around. Lacau is a puzzle to me. Sometimes I think he is really misunderstood and sometimes I think he is trying to curb our activities. But I believe I could get on with him without much difficulty. The crux of the excavation matter was the fact that he was not informed earlier about the finding of the [Aye and Horemheb] temple.* Until he heard of that find, he was very pleasant about it all. Not informing him earlier was a mistake on our part under the circumstances.[26]

Nelson understood and acknowledged that Chicago's own actions had strengthened Lacau's resistance to granting the concession, writing to Breasted, "I agree with you that Lacau's attitude towards the Karnak concession seems to be much more stiff than it was when I first talked with him on that subject. I think our Luxor house may have something to do with it."[27]

Karnak Concession Granted, July 1930

In early July 1930, a concession was granted to document the temple of Ramesses III in the First Court at Karnak (fig. 5.3; plan 2) and at the Ramesses III temple at the Mut Temple (fig. 5.4), both elements in the overall goal to publish the monuments of Ramesses III. The permission also included the Bubastite Portal.[28] Breasted wrote to Nelson, "From these two letters of Lacau's dated June 17th . . . it is quite clear that our publication enterprises have prodded him into action. I do not believe that when we first applied for Karnak he had any idea of being as stiff as he is in his letter of June 17th."[29] However, the concession was not as extensive as Breasted had hoped, for it excluded some elements: "It seems to cover what we want at present, though I trust that the provision prohibiting us from publishing any plans or architectural details will not be construed as preventing us from attaching to our plates such sketch plans and elevations as we have included in M.H. Vol. 1 to indicate where our various plates are taken from in the temple."[30]

Emphasizing Gauthier's comments that the question of a "full publication" of Karnak was out of the question, Lacau was very strict about the title of the forthcoming series, stipulating that it could not be called "Karnak I" (or similar), presumably because that sounded like the beginning of a more exhaustive publication project that would eclipse French efforts. Nelson forecast that Lacau would "insist on a title that will limit the contents to the particular building upon which we are working. The settlement of this question is not immediately urgent but we must be thinking about it."[31] It seems a bit "cart before the horse" to worry about the name of the publication so far in advance of its appearance (the first volume of the Karnak work did not appear until 1936), but these issues mattered to Breasted. After much consideration, the series name *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* was adopted, although even that title does not suggest a limited project.

Once officially at Karnak, Nelson mused to Breasted, "I have no doubt that eventually we shall publish all of Karnak. We must go at it slowly, as far as asking for material to publish goes, and in the end we shall get what we want. The more we publish, the more difficult it will be for anyone to hold back any of the area. I only regret that we are excluded from doing the architecture as well. Hoelscher would do a fine job there."[32]

This attitude continued despite the clear restrictions on what parts of the temple were available to Chicago. As Nelson wrote to Breasted:

> This brings up a very important matter, namely the plans for the future work at Karnak. We do not

and 1918–31) and who served as director of that institution from 1932 to 1939.

* In reference to the discovery of that temple to the north of Medinet Habu in 1930. See further in chapter 4, "Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926–1936."

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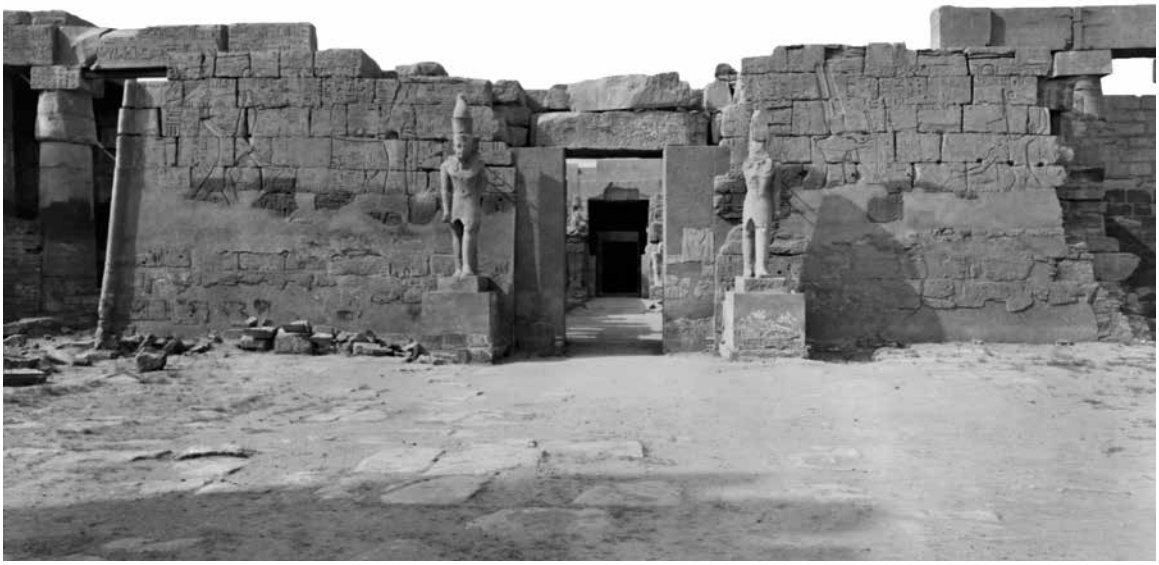

Figure 5.3. Facade of the temple of Ramesses III in the First Court at Karnak, ca. 1930–35. Photo: H. Leichter.

Figure 5.4. The temple of Ramesses III at the Mut Temple, looking south, ca. 1930–35. Photo: H. Leichter.

> want our publications to be haphazard, with a little from this part of the site and a little from that in the same volume. I do not see how we can avoid something of this difficulty in view of the attitude of the Department of Antiquities towards our work. If they would allow us systematically to proceed from one end of the temple to the other, we might be able to produce the proper sort of publication. But if they are going to exclude us from bits here and there and from whole areas in the middle of the compound, it is going to be difficult to maintain any orderly arrangement of the material, and without an orderly arrangement, the publication will be seriously defective from the point of view of convenience of reference. I must take up this matter and try to evolve some sort of plan for the work as a whole which will meet the requirements of the Department as well as those of the users of the publication.[33]

It is hard to avoid the image of the nose of the camel under the tent—once given permission for the Ramesses III temples, Breasted and Nelson wanted more of the Karnak complex.

Indeed, they also discussed working on the decorated and inscribed *talatat** blocks of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton (fig. 5.5) that Breasted had seen inside the ruins of the Second Pylon on his honeymoon trip in 1894. He recalled that former Survey Egyptologist Caroline Ransom Williams had discussed their relationship to the decorated blocks of the sun temples at Amarna, hoping that the Karnak material would aid in the reconstruction of the Amarna scenes: "This remark . . . stimulates a hope that I have long cherished but eventually we might be able to gain access to these fragments. They have lain exposed to the weather for the Lord knows how many years, Lacau has neither the money nor the men to publish them, and I am inclined to think the day may come when we can undertake this job." He recalled his first encounter with the *talatat*: "The fallen pylon from which they were taken out was full of snakes, not excluding cobras, and plentiful scorpions. I remember crawling into it when I was a youngster and sitting around in the heart of the mess for hours, copying what tumbled fragments were exposed on the relief side. But I finally surrendered to the insistence of a new wife and gave it up. Now that these pieces are taken out they are just as inaccessible as they were when they were buried in the pylon!"[34]

Figure 5.5. *Talatat* blocks from a temple of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton) at Karnak showing the king and Queen Nefertiti offering to the Aton. Photo: E. Teeter.

Predictably, work at Karnak created delays in projects at Medinet Habu as the teams of epigraphers and artists divided their time between the sites. In fall 1930, Nelson reported, "If it was not for the Karnak job, we could finish not only Volume Two but Volume Three [of Medinet Habu] this season."† This conflict between the two projects continued in early 1932, when Nelson wrote to Breasted, "Half the season is past, and still we have not begun work at Medinet Habu. . . . This state of affairs has arisen from the difficulties we have encountered with the badly destroyed reliefs at Karnak, which have consumed more time than

* Small-scale blocks (ca. 53 × 21 × 24 centimeters) used to build monuments of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton.

† C. Breasted to Nelson, 7 October 1930, CHP 432; Nelson to Breasted, 10 October 1930, CHP 98. *Medinet Habu* II was published in 1932 and *Medinet Habu* III in 1934.

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we anticipated. Bollacher* was ready to begin at Medinet Habu about a month ago, but he has been diverted to color work for Hoelscher and will not be free from that for another two weeks yet. Canziani† will begin at M.H. in about a week and Chubb‡ after two or three weeks."[35]

But even with the resulting delays at Medinet Habu, in 1932 Nelson and Breasted began planning for further concessions at Karnak. Predictably, they again encountered resistance from the Ministry and also their French colleagues, yet they were confident in their own abilities: "On the other hand, the situation on the east bank is complicated by the fact that the government desires to retain Karnak for its own staff. I know that Chevrier hopes to secure an assistant, a draughtsman and an Egyptologist in connection with his work. I quite sympathize with the Government desire, although the prospect of this desire being met in the near future is not very bright. I think we may count on continuing to secure concessions at Karnak for some years to come."[36]

Congenial relations with Chevrier were critical to the success of the Epigraphic Survey at Karnak—indeed, during the negotiations for the concession, Breasted wrote, "One of Lacau's conditions in letting us go in there was that we should not conflict in any way with Chevrier's work, which after all was a reasonable requirement."[37] This cooperation was essential because Chevrier was working in the First Court, clearing the south wing of the Second Pylon to remove the *talatat* and other blocks, and also doing an architectural study of the Ramesses III temple.§ Breasted commented to Nelson, "I am very glad you're operating in friendly contact with Chevrier."[38]

By the end of 1933, epigraphic work at the temple of Ramesses III at Karnak was nearing completion, spurring Nelson to look for further projects at the site: "This spring, I must also secure a further concession at Karnak, as with the completion of the Ramses III temple there will not be enough material left in our present concession to employ our staff next season, if we retain the same number of draughtsmen.¶ I am thinking of asking for the great hypostyle hall. I wonder if Lacau would let us have it. It would be a wonderful job and one needing greatly to be done. And only an organization such as ours should tackle it."[39]

The following year, Nelson set his sights on the Khonsu Temple (fig. 5.6; plan 2): "I talked to Chevrier and mentioned that we expected to complete the copying of the [Ramesses III] temple by the end of this season and would be applying for a further concession . . . he suggested that we ask for the Khonsu Temple. . . . The Khonsu Temple would make a very interesting subject on which to work. It would give us another complete temple and the subject of the reliefs is interesting. I have about decided to apply for it instead of the Hypostyle Hall, asking for the latter only if we cannot have the former."[40]

In February 1937, Nelson requested to photograph Hatshepsut blocks from the Chapelle Rouge that had been recovered from the Third Pylon starting in 1927. Permission was granted in March, but with the stipulation that Lacau had the publication rights and that Chicago was not allowed to publish any photos without his consent.[41] One might think that Nelson's interest was in comparative material for festival or offering scenes at Medinet Habu (or Karnak), but the more than 250 photos taken of the material (fig. 5.7) suggest that Chicago was interested in an actual publication project.

* Alfred Bollacher, Epigraphic Survey artist, 1924–35.

† Virgilio Canziani, Epigraphic Survey artist, 1926–38.

‡ J. Anthony Chubb, Epigraphic Survey artist, 1927–35.

§ H. Chevrier, *Le temple reposoir de Ramsès III à Karnak* (Cairo: Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, 1933). Chevrier noted that the reliefs and inscriptions on the temple were to be published by the Oriental Institute (Chevrier, *Le temple reposoir*, 1 n1).

¶ Epigraphy at the Ramesses III temple at Karnak was completed in 1934 (Nelson to Breasted, 22 February 1934, CHP 304).

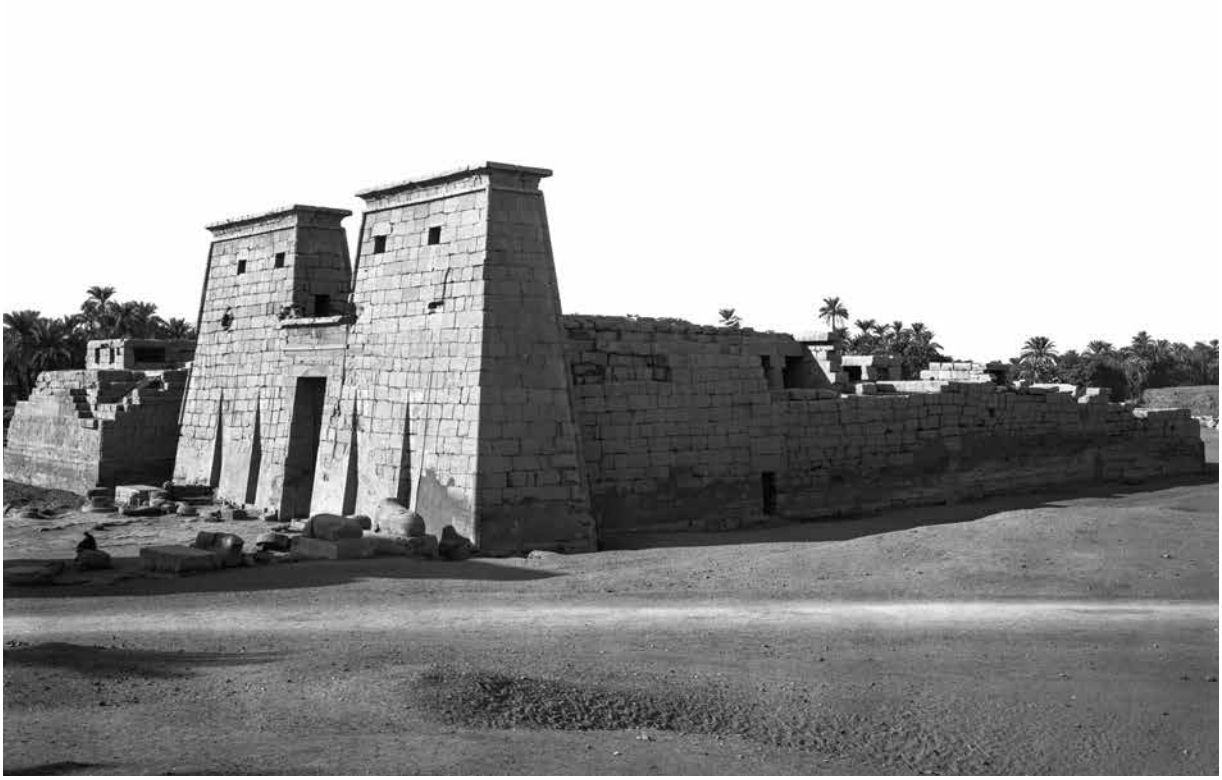

Figure 5.6. The Khonsu Temple at Karnak, ca. 1936. Photo: F. O. Allen.

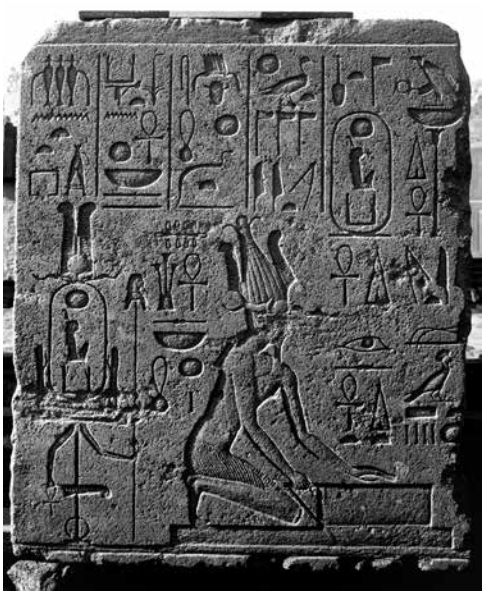

Figure 5.7. Block from Hatshepsut's Chapelle Rouge, photographed by the Epigraphic Survey, ca. 1937, showing Hatshepsut making a mudbrick, part of a ritual for founding a temple. Photo: H. Leichter.

There were other requests as well. In October 1937, Nelson applied to Étienne Drioton, Lacau's successor, for permission to copy seven reliefs at Karnak (as well as at the Ramesseum and Luxor Temple) "not in our concession" as comparative material for the work at Karnak and Medinet Habu. The request was granted in December after a short delay due to the Bairum holiday.[42]

By 1937, the Epigraphic Survey was so involved at Karnak that interest in Medinet Habu seemed to wane. As Nelson wrote to Oriental Institute director John Wilson, "To me, it seems that Karnak is far more important than anything else here, once we have completed Medinet Habu or even the Great Temple of Ramses III alone. The more I see of the material at Karnak, the more I feel that it should be published as soon as possible." However,

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he expressed his concerns about the cooperation of the Antiquities Service: "The situation here is very uncertain under the new regime and the whole European situation makes it still more uncertain. I would not advocate again installing such a large expedition here as we had in the past. It was too large for the best work, and was, I feel, out of proportion to the opportunities before the Institute."[43]

But there was also a practical reason for working primarily at Karnak in the late 1930s: dramatic budget cuts mandated by the University of Chicago. In discussions between Nelson and Wilson about how to cut expenses, Nelson suggested, "By devoting ourselves to Karnak for some years to come, we would undoubtedly find it less expensive" than working on both sides of the river. In early January 1937, the economic situation was so dire that the entire scientific staff was to be reduced to Nelson, a photographer, and a single artist.[44] Of special concern was the cost of operating the boats and the second fleet of cars that were necessary for work at Medinet Habu across the river.[45]

By the late 1930s, the Epigraphic Survey was working in the Khonsu Temple and the Bubastite Portal at Karnak (see separate sections, this chapter) and was photographing the Chapelle Rouge blocks of Hatshepsut (see fig. 5.7). Two volumes of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* had been published (in 1936). One might have had the impression that Chicago was indeed "publishing Karnak," although much of it remained a French concession. Further, Nelson had his "own" project in the Hypostyle Hall and was also compiling key plans for the entire complex (and other Theban temples) while working on his catalog of temple iconography. Then, because of World War II, the Survey suspended all operations in Egypt from 1940 to 1946; when it returned, it resumed work at Karnak.

The Temples of Ramesses III at Karnak, 1930-1936

The Survey's first projects at Karnak were the temples of Ramesses III: one in the First Court of the temple of Amun (see fig. 5.3; plan 2) and the other at the temple of Mut (see fig. 5.4). They were selected as part of the overall study of monuments of Ramesses III and as a complement to that king's complex at Medinet Habu.

The concession was granted in July 1930, though Lacau had been reluctant to grant it because of the delay in the appearance of any final publications of the reliefs at Medinet Habu. Charles Breasted reported that "luckily" a copy of *Medinet Habu* I had been delivered shortly before he met with Lacau, bolstering Chicago's credibility.[46]

Nelson estimated that the recording of the Ramesses temples could be finished in "two full seasons [*sic*] work."[47] Originally, Breasted and Nelson wanted an excavation component: "In fact, I think that ultimately, we may be able to do the architectural job as well as the epigraphic at that site [Karnak]. No one in the Government is prepared to do it, at least as far as knowledge is concerned."[48] The comment is puzzling because, at the time, Chevrier, director of works at Karnak, was excavating the temple of Akhenaton in east Karnak, clearing the Second and Third Pylons, and—most relevant—beginning his own architectural study of the Ramesses III temple, whose texts and reliefs Chicago was to document.[49]

Shortly after the concession was received, Nelson reported going to Karnak "to arrange with Chevrier as to the carrying on of our work." He took photographer Henry Leichter with him, to plan how the work would be laid out.[50] They also had to attend to logistics, especially storage of their bulky ladders and scaffolds. Nelson suggested that they build "a new house" for their operations, an action that surely would have been inflammatory, seen as another move on Chicago's part to create a permanent presence at the temple. Instead, Chevrier allowed them to use a building that had

been erected in conjunction with the work done to reinforce the foundations of the Hypostyle Hall but was otherwise unused and scheduled to be demolished.* In their usual style, the Chicago team decided the building needed to be improved: "The interior will require a little remodeling to suit our needs, but that will cost very little and having this building will be a saving, as [we] should otherwise have been compelled to build for ourselves." There was also concern that the team not get in the way of the tourists (and vice versa), Nelson noting, "I also arranged that the Department should open the Bubastite Gate for our use, and station a guard there at our expense, so that our staff and our material may enter and leave by this side gate instead of the main gate. . . . I am looking forward with great interest to this new work at Karnak."[51]

Work at the Temple

In October 1930, Nelson advised Breasted, "I am proposing to do little at Karnak this season but photograph the building. . . . Even if we do nothing but photography on the other side this season, that will be considerable gain and we can be familiarizing ourselves with the contents of the temple before we begin to draw."[52] There was a discussion of delaying work at Karnak "until next year" in order to finish *Medinet Habu* II and III,† but Leichter began photography at Karnak in late November 1930 while the epigraphers continued their work in western Thebes.[53]

Breasted urged Nelson "to get the staff to begin work more promptly at Karnak,"[54] approving of their starting at 6:30 a.m., and "for the morning hours only."[55] By the middle of November 1931, Nelson reported:

> We have been very busy at Karnak and find the little temple there full of interest. Two double plates have been completed and several others ought to be finished before the next week is over. We are dealing with an entirely new lot of material, chiefly religious, and are enjoying the change from the style of the Medinet Habu inscriptions. Canziani is producing some very good plates covering the feast of Opet and the journey on river from Karnak to Luxor. Unfortunately, like all the reliefs at Ramses III's Karnak temple, this series is very badly injured, but sufficient survives to make an attractive plate. Bollacher is doing the reliefs showing the Feast of Min, with its procession, something that has not previously been properly recorded in drawing. This forms an interesting supplement to the similar subject at the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, though it supplies very little new material. Chubb is working on the procession of the feast of Amon. Wilber‡ has completed the little battle scenes in the interior of the temple. His line has greatly improved as well as his work in general, but suffers from the same feeling that detracted from Longley's§ work, an absence of the artistic touch. It is all very regular and correct, but it looks much like Lepsius' or some of the older publications, with its rigid formality and hardness. Still it is good material to publish.[56]

Work at Karnak presented unforeseen challenges arising from turf wars between the workmen from Karnak and the men from Gourna whom Nelson brought with them to the east. As Nelson reported to Breasted in late November 1931:

* The structure stood where the Cheikh Labib magazine is today. I thank Emmanuelle Arnaudìes for this information. Chicago had another mudbrick storage building near the Hypostyle Hall. Both structures were operated on annual permits. See "Autorisation pour occupation d'une maison et ses dependances sur deux portions de terrain antique," signed by Nelson and Gauthier, 8 November 1931, and renewed in 1932, 1933, and 1934 (Marks Collection).

† Breasted to Nelson, 8 November 1930, CHP 433. *Medinet Habu* II appeared in 1932, and *Medinet Habu* III in 1934.

‡ Donald Wilber, Epigraphic Survey artist, 1931–33.

§ Laurance J. Longley, Epigraphic Survey artist, 1928–31, 1934–37.

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> I received word by telegram from Edgerton* two days after I had left Luxor that four of our men who were stationed at the temple here had been attacked about 9:30 one evening by a gang of some dozen men or so and severely beaten with *nabuts* [thick wooden staves], so that two of them were placed under the doctor's care. One of the temple guards, also a Gurna man, who ran out of the temple when he heard the noise, was also so severely beaten that he had to be removed to the hospital where it was found necessary to operate for a blood clot on the brain. Fortunately all the victims are now recovered. . . . So far three or four of the gang have been identified but the two chief offenders, who also stole some of the men's garments, have not been discovered, though their identity is known. The former Omda [village leader] of Karnak is undoubtedly back of the affair. He is a notorious character and the terror of the neighborhood. He and the other people of Karnak resent my bringing our men from Gurna over here to Karnak. They regard Karnak as their perquisite.† The Omda is the head of a gang of thugs and is quite surely engaged deeply in the looting of antiquities, specializing in those of Karnak. According to report the Chief Guard and even Tewfik Boulos, the Chief Inspector, are in the combine, though of course I do not want that repeated as I have no evidence in the matter. The law governing such affairs, as far as it applies to fighting and beating with *nabuts*, makes an injury that requires the doctor's care for more than twenty days a criminal offense that can be punished by imprisonment. If the victim is discharged by the doctor in less than twenty days, it is a misdemeanor punishable by fine only. Our men have been more than twenty days under the doctor's care. When the case will come up for trial I do not yet know. The police have placed a guard of two Sudanese at the house where our men are staying and I do not anticipate further trouble. The colonel of police from Kena came here by special instruction of the Mudir to express the latter's regrets at the occurrence and to assure me that they would see that our men were not further molested. . . . Our own people have not been interfered with in any way, though I have a feeling that our neighbors are, in general, hostile to us. I only hope there is no trouble when the place is closed.[57]

In response, Breasted wrote, "I was rather disturbed to hear of the trouble at Karnak. It should not surprise me on the West Side, but on the Luxor side it is disquieting. This is especially the case with reference to Tewfik Boulos with whom I have had dealings for a good many years and I have always found him very straightforward and reliable. I should be very much interested to hear the outcome of the whole incident."[58]

In 1932, the Survey worked on the scenes of the Festival of Opet on the west exterior wall of the Ramesses III temple, showing the procession of the sacred boats from Karnak to Luxor Temple (see chapter 6, "Luxor Temple, 1937, 1975–," with figs. 6.2–6.3 and 6.24).[59] Nelson had special hopes of documenting the section that showed the procession leaving the temple at Karnak, for it would record the appearance of its facade (then the west face of the Second Pylon). However, "five or six" meters of that area were covered by a later east–west wall built to enclose the First Court, and that wall covered the beginning of the sequence of the scenes. Nelson and Chevrier discussed the possibility of temporarily removing the later wall, which was not decorated in any way, thereby allowing Chicago access to the Ramesside reliefs. Chevrier suggested that the removal and the reerection of the

* William F. Edgerton, Egyptologist who worked for the Survey in the 1926–28 seasons before returning to Chicago, where he had a long career at the Oriental Institute.

† This attitude still prevails. To this day, the Epigraphic Survey cannot use its own workmen at the Khonsu Temple but is obligated to use the Karnak *reis* and workforce.

wall could be done by the government at Chicago's expense, estimating the cost at £E200. Breasted was enthusiastic about the prospect, writing to Nelson, "If there is any chance you can find a representation of the facade of the Amon Temple, the cost ought to be incurred without any hesitation."[60] But in the end, the wall was not dismantled, and the documentation of the Opet reliefs at Karnak was incomplete.

Not surprisingly, work at Karnak proceeded at the expense of progress at Medinet Habu. Nelson wrote to Breasted in late October 1931:

> All six draughtsmen are now working at Karnak. Some sheets of drawing have already been turned in and are being collated. Karnak is a very interesting subject, but the execution of the work on the temple was much cruder and the present state of the wall is much worse than at Medinet Habu. However, the subject matter is, to a considerable extent, very interesting and will make a fascinating publication. I have not yet figured out how many volumes will be necessary for the temple, but I hope we shall be able to get it all into two volumes. Most of it is unpublished. Before long the building is going to collapse. The restoration and repairs done by the Government have not helped with our work. The walls are most irregular and out of plumb so that we are finding great difficulty with the photography. But we shall work it out in some way.[61]

In January 1932, Nelson reported to Breasted that Karnak was still absorbing most of the Survey's time:

> Half the season is past, and still we have not begun work at Medinet Habu. This state of affairs has arisen from the difficulties we have encountered with the badly destroyed reliefs at Karnak which have consumed more time than we anticipated. . . . When the plates now underway are finished, we shall have finished all the most difficult walls at Ramses III's temple at Karnak. . . . In addition, we shall have a copy of most of the Bubastite Gate inscription and of several of the ritual scenes from the outside wall. We shall also have prepared the much mutilated inscriptions on the rear wall of the terrace. So you see, the job at Karnak is well under control and another season ought to see a volume ready for the press. It will make an interesting publication, for practically all the material is unpublished and some of it is of importance.[62]

The temple was also of interest because it, like Medinet Habu, had records of the foreign wars of Ramesses III. Nelson commented on the greater understanding gained regarding the chronology of the sequence of the Syrian and the Libyan wars by working on multiple monuments simultaneously:

> At Medinet Habu, there is nothing that fixes, with certainty, the succession of the Syrian campaign and the second Libyan war. But at Karnak, on the east wall of R. III's temple, just back of the pylon, are a few crude and badly injured war reliefs which at one time commemorated, apparently, only Syrian campaigns. . . . Some time after these reliefs were covered, the figures of the foreigners were altered from Syrians to Libyans, but the change was so carelessly done that some of the figures are now absurd mixtures of both peoples. . . . The conclusion I draw from these reliefs is that, possibly, the Syrian war preceded the Libyan war, and that some of the reliefs of the former were recarved to serve for the latter and later campaign. . . . Aside from this one fact (?) no new historical evidence has been disclosed.*

* Nelson to Breasted, 26 January 1932, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1274. The subject of the foreign wars, especially which ones were actual rather than fictive, is still debated. See K. A. Kitchen, "Ramesses III and the Ramesside Period," in *Ramesses III: The Life and Times of Egypt's Last Hero*, edited by E. H. Cline and D. O'Connor (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 12–18. In March 1932, Breasted wrote to Nelson, "I wish those blessed Egyptian draftsmen and sculptors had been a little more decisive in their representations of foreigners so that we could really finally decide whether the war was against the Syrians or the Libyans!" (11 March 1932, CHP 1302).

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The Survey continued to focus on Karnak in 1933, with Nelson reporting, "We are moving along with the Karnak drawings. I now intend to complete the whole of the little Ramses III temple for the first volume and shall have it ready by the end of the season. We shall have to cut off some time from Medinet Habu, but with so many drawings from Karnak ready it seems best to me to complete that volume rather than to have the plates lying here for another year."[63]

The work was aided by Chevrier who, in 1934 and 1935, was able to replace a number of decorated blocks that had fallen from the edge of the west pylon, restoring the smiting scene on the facade.* Although not mentioned in the correspondence, the Chicago team must have been working in very close proximity to Chevrier's crew, not only as the pylon of the Ramesses III temple was restored but also while the French extracted the *talatat* from the south wing of the Second Pylon—hence Lacau's cautions that Chicago had to "keep out of Chevrier's way." Breasted instructed, "we should not conflict in any way with Chevrier's work."[64]

Publication of the Ramesses Temples at Karnak

The publication of the Ramesses III temples, including its format and even its title, were matters of extensive correspondence. In 1931, Nelson forecast two volumes; then he reconsidered and thought it would be one "fairly fat volume" because there was not enough material for two. He hoped to have it in press in summer 1934.† He projected at least eighty-five plates, thirty-four of them double, and a text introduction of ten to fifteen pages with a separate volume of translations to be written by Wilson and Edgerton. He envisioned the volume to be of the same dimensions as *Medinet Habu* I and II (60 × 48 centimeters), commenting, "With its appearance, we shall certainly have one temple, although a small one, completely published epigraphically. I only wish we could do the architecture. I understand from Chevrier that he had completed the architectural studies of the building in one season [1930] during intervals of other work.[65] I do not like to hold up Medinet Habu, but it is important to publish this Karnak volume."[66]

The title of the publication was the subject of much correspondence. Breasted wrote, "I do not see why we should not call our first volume of Karnak, *Karnak I*. The Ramses III Temple will occupy a whole volume."[67] The discussion dragged on into late 1933, when Nelson wrote to Breasted, "Lacau expressly forbade us to make any statement that implied that we had permission to publish 'Karnak.' Therefore, 'Karnak I' would hardly be permissible. I presume we must resort to some designation as 'Temple of Ramses III at Karnak.' But then there is another temple of Ramses III at Karnak, over by the Mut Temple. I must have a talk with Lacau on the subject some time this year."[68] The letters continued, with Breasted writing to Nelson, "I think the title you suggest—Temple of Ramses III at Karnak—is alright. I do not believe that it would in any way be confused with the scanty remains of the other Temple of Ramses III at Karnak. When anyone speaks of the Ramses III Temple at Karnak it is always the one which is to be covered by this volume."[69] By the end of 1933, they had settled on the series name *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak*.[70] Nelson commented that the compromise title should satisfy Lacau: "In this way we shall be observing the demand of the Department of Antiquities that we do not state that we are 'publishing Karnak.' What our title implies is that we are publishing a selection of material from the site. The volumes will probably come to be known as Karnak 1, 2 etc. I see no reason for Lacau objecting to this procedure."[71] Letters were also exchanged about the design of the cover and whether there was going

* For the before and after images of the temple, see *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* I, pls. 1–2. The epigraphy was finished in the 1933 season, before Chevrier restored the facade blocks. The drawing of the smiting scene was done from photographs of the loose blocks. The images were reduced to the same scale and then drawn. See H. Chevrier, "Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak (1934–1935)," *ASAE* 35 (1935): 108–9, pl. III.

† *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* I and II appeared in 1936.

to be "a colored decoration on the cover as on the Medinet Habu volumes."[72]

By 1933, as the project approached its final stages, Nelson advised Breasted, "We shall certainly have the Karnak volume ready before the end of the season, in fact, well before the end. It will be interesting, though there is scarcely a complete scene in the whole publication. This volume will have no colored plates as there is no color left."[73] Nelson initially compromised on the tradition of publishing photographs along with the drawings, suggesting that fewer photos be used to reduce the cost of the publication: "There will be about a hundred [plates] in all. . . . I would like to publish more photos, as such seem to be very welcome to the users of our books to judge from the reviews. I am, however, keeping the number of photos down so as to save in publication costs. If I included as many photos as I would like to publish, the number would be so large as to require two volumes. Even as it is, the volume is going to be larger than any we have so far published, especially as there is to be an Introduction, on which I am now working."[74]

By early 1934, it was decided to publish the temple in two volumes to allow for more photos. Nelson wrote:

> I have been going over carefully the work that remains to be done before we can have all the plates of the little temple of Ramses III at Karnak ready for publication. I believe we could make it if we pushed hard, but that is not good for the work. Something we would regret would be sure to creep in. I have therefore decided to split the volume into two parts, including in the first volume, which we shall have ready at the end of this season, the outer face of the pylon and all of the interior through the hypostyle hall. This will give us about fifty plates and the introduction of, say, eight to ten pages. The second volume, which we can easily complete early next season, will include the remainder of the Ramses III Temple by the Amon Temple, the remainder of the Ramses III Temple by the Mut Temple, and the Bubastite gate. That will clean up all of our present concession. I believe this the best plan.[75]

The two volumes appeared together in 1936. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume I: Ramses III's Temple within the Great Inclosure of Amon, Part I* (OIP 25) had seventy-eight plates and a three-page preface (rather than the projected eight- to ten-page introduction). *Volume II: Ramses III's Temple within the Great Inclosure of Amon, Part II, and Ramses III's Temple in the Precinct of Mut* (OIP 35), had forty-seven plates and no text.* The cover of what is assumed to be the first batch of copies to be bound bears a rectangular medallion of one of the colossal statues, while copies that were bound later are unadorned.

The preface of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* I refers (p. ix) to "the volume of text which is planned to supplement these two folios of plates," but that volume never appeared. It was apparently to be the work of Keith Seele, for an unfinished manuscript by him that was to be published in the Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization series is housed in the ISAC (formerly Oriental Institute) Museum Archive.† In later years, the texts were transcribed by Kenneth Kitchen and published in *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical* (vol. 5; Oxford: Blackwell, 1983). That volume was dedicated to "the members (past & present) of the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, to whom is owed so much by Egyptology and especially by Ramesses III." Translations by Kenneth Kitchen appeared in *Ramesside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated: Translations* (vol. 5; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008).

* The nonsequential OIP numbers for *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* I and II reflect the change in plans from one volume to two. A book's OIP number does not necessarily reflect its order (and date) of publication. For example, OIP volumes 28–30 of the Anatolian expedition were published in 1937, after *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* I (OIP 25) and II (OIP 35) appeared in 1936, and *Mereruka* I (OIP 31) appeared in 1938, after OIP 35.

† Brett McClain is working on a new edition of Seele's work.

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Figure 5.8. Ricardo Caminos (top) and Stanley Shepherd at work at the Bubastite Portal, 1947. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

The Bubastite Portal, 1931–1954

The Bubastite Portal is located between the southwest face of the Second Pylon and the east wall of the Ramesses III temple in the forecourt of the temple of Amun at Karnak (fig. 5.8; plan 2). It was constructed by Shoshenq I and decorated by him, his successor Osorkon I, and the high priest Osorkon (son of Takelot I) in the Twenty-Second Dynasty (ca. 945–889 BC).

The gate was included in the first Chicago program at Karnak because, as Nelson stated, its inscriptions and reliefs were in such "precarious condition." The introduction to the gate's final publication (1954) simply states that the project was an "extension of its [the Survey's] recording of its contiguous Ramses III temple."[76] But the Bubastite Portal was very different subject matter.

Nelson started copying the texts in April 1931. He commented, "The Bubastite Gate inscription is about as difficult a text to copy as I have ever encountered. I worked on it for two to three hours a morning for three weeks, but there is very much more to be made of it than I have so far been able to secure."[77] He further commented, "It is wretchedly cut and badly preserved in large part. I do not envy the draughtsman to whose lot it falls next season. I hope to find time this summer to work through some of the inscription so that I may know more about it next autumn when we resume work."[78] Once away from Luxor, Nelson continued to work on the text from "a rather poor" photograph, and he also borrowed notes that Alan Gardiner had made, which he collated with his own copy.[79] In the 1931 season, new artist Geoffrey S. Mileham worked on

it, which proved to be a real test of his abilities, and he is not mentioned in the final publication.*

The reliefs on the gate had been copied and published and the brief captioning texts translated by earlier Egyptologists,[80] but the longer, "wretchedly preserved [historical] text" had not been fully translated, although the Berlin office of the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (dictionary of the Egyptian language) had a copy made by German Egyptologist Kurt Sethe in 1905.[81] Nelson hoped to consult this resource, advising Breasted that he would contact Hermann Grapow, the coeditor of the *Wörterbuch* in Berlin, to obtain a duplicate set of Sethe's notes and vocabulary slips (*Zettel*) because "This is very necessary for our work this coming winter." But having seen how difficult and damaged the texts were, he was skeptical: "I fear the zettle [*sic*], as is so often the case, have largely omitted the most damaged portions, and those are the parts which need the most attention."[82]

The gate must have been a priority for the Survey because work started there in 1931 along with the work at the adjacent Ramesses III temple. In early 1932, Nelson confidently reported, "We shall have a copy of most of the Bubastite Gate inscription."[83] However, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* II (the temples of Ramesses III at Karnak and in the Mut complex) appeared in 1936 without the Bubastite Portal. From 1934 to 1937, the texts were again collated by Survey Egyptologists Keith Seele and Siegfried Schott.† The work seemed to drag on, and in 1936, Nelson reported that artist Laurance Longley had finished several incomplete plates begun in 1935. But by that time, the Chicago team was working at the Khonsu Temple and Medinet Habu, leaving little time to devote to the gate.

All work ceased during the war years, resuming in October 1946. In 1947, Egyptologist Ricardo Caminos joined the Survey and work on the gate resumed, spurred on by the fact that in 1945 and 1946, he had produced the "first draft" of a book on the texts of Prince Osorkon at Karnak, relying on photographs and copies of the texts the Epigraphic Survey previously had made.[84] Part of that work was the basis for his doctorate, awarded by the University of Chicago in 1947. It seems likely that Caminos's prior interest in the texts motivated the Survey to renew its attack on the notoriously difficult texts.

Caminos, Richard Parker, and Charles Nims resumed the epigraphic work begun by Seele and Schott, and the collation process was finalized in the 1951 season after Caminos's departure in 1950 to Oxford to work with Alan Gardiner.

Publication of the Bubastite Portal

Although in 1934 Nelson planned to include the reliefs of the Bubastite Portal in *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak, Part II*, the two publication projects were separated, probably because the completion of the gate was delayed due to work at Medinet Habu and the Khonsu Temple, and Nelson did not want to put off the publication of *Part II*, which eventually appeared in 1936.[85]

Finally, in 1954, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume III: The Bubastite Portal* (OIP 74) appeared, nearly two decades after the first two publications in the series. The twenty-two plates with fourteen pages of introduction appeared as a set of loose plates in a folio, the first Epigraphic

* Nelson to Breasted, 24 November 1931, CHP 285. "Draftsman" Geoffrey S. Mileham is included in the staff list in *The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (3rd ed.), December 1931, 67. He previously worked with D. Randall-MacIver and Leonard Woolley in Sudan (Nelson to C. Breasted, 22 July 1931, CHP 1029) and published *Churches in Lower Nubia* for the Philadelphia University Museum in 1910. Nelson refers to him as "more of [an] architect and is also an older man and less able to pick up the kind of work we want. . . . I trust he will prove capable to meeting our requirement" (Nelson to Breasted, 24 November 1931, CHP 285). His contract was renewed for the 1932 season, during which he worked on the renovation of the artists' studios at Chicago House (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–").

† The introduction to the 1954 publication states that the epigraphy started in 1934 (*Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* III, ix), but Nelson made collations in 1931, and by 1932 "most" of the texts were done (at least in a preliminary way).

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Survey publication in that format.* At 38 × 48 centimeters, it was smaller than the previous *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* volumes.

The plates and photography were a combination of pre- and postwar work. Leichter is credited with one photograph and Nims with four; artists Longley and Chubb with two and four drawings, respectively; and the postwar draftsmen Douglas Champion and Stanley Shepherd are credited with ten and five plates, respectively.†

It was intended that the historical texts on the gate would be published by Caminos and Hughes in the Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization series, with Hughes treating the Shoshenq texts.[86] In April 1957, Caminos contacted Keith Seele, then editor of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* in the Oriental Institute's publications office, reporting that he had informed Hughes that his manuscript was ready for the press; having received no update from Hughes, he wrote, "it seems useless for me to wait any longer for his reply, and I have therefore decided to send you my typescript to have published in book form quite independently from Hughes' work, the decision being taken with better heart because my *Chronicle of Prince Osorkon* is a self-contained piece of writing, not to mention that the inscriptions studied by me have little or nothing to do with the Shoshenk I texts which Hughes is supposed to deal with." But in the same letter, Caminos laid out completely unreasonable conditions for working with the editorial office, stating, "neither the Editor nor anybody else may introduce any other changes at all in the typescript, except in the case of misspellings or mistypings," a lack of willingness to accept edits that carried over even to the size and style of fonts.[87] He made his feelings very clear: "I have never believed in editorial offices myself. . . . As a matter of principle, I cannot allow anything written by me and appearing under my name to be tampered with by any editorial office. . . . I firmly believe that the author of a scholarly work has the right to demand that his work be printed exactly as he has written it."[88] Seele tried to reason with him, writing, "I believe the Oriental Institute can be trusted to maintain satisfactory standards of publication. You have yourself been much more critical of our publications than any one that I know of. On the whole, scholars the world over have considered Oriental Institute books to be of exceedingly high quality." Seele further noted, "I am afraid that the Oriental Institute has never received from one of its authors a perfect manuscript. If yours therefore, really 'admits of no change,' it will be absolutely unique."[89]

In November 1957, Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling discussed the "impasse" with Parker, a former Survey field director and chair of the Egyptology department at Brown University, who was also a close colleague of Caminos. He was not optimistic, advising Kraeling that he did "not think it will do any good" to discuss it further with Caminos.[90]

When Caminos threatened to take the manuscript to another publisher, Seele tried to make the case that the Oriental Institute still should publish the texts, "since at least a portion of your labors in the preparation of *The Annals of Prince Osorkon* (are you sure you do not want to entitle the book *The Chronicles of Prince Osorkon*?) was spent while you were in the service of the Oriental Institute," referring to it as the "text volume" for *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* III.[91] But Caminos stayed as intransigent as ever.

At the end of April 1957, Seele wrote him a scathing letter:

> I regret exceedingly that I have the painful duty of returning to you your manuscript *The Chronicle*

* In February 1950, Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling and George Hughes discussed the direction of the Survey. Among their resolutions was to reduce the size of the publications to ".38 × .48" (meters) and to box the plates rather than bind them (15 February 1950, ISAC Museum Archives). Binding was a considerable part of the cost of each volume, and in the past, only a portion of the entire print run (usually 500 copies) of each volume would be bound, the others held back until they were needed.

† One plate (pl. 16) was drawn by Chubb and then revised and completed by Champion.

> *of Prince Osorkon*, with the unanimous decision of the Oriental Institute publications committee that we cannot take the responsibility of printing your book in the face of threats on your part to withdraw it at any time in case of disagreement between you and one or more of us. . . . If I were not fully aware of your general animosity toward the Oriental Institute, so widely and freely expressed, I should be curious to know how you could possibly justify the attitude which has permeated your letters about your proposed book. Though you were paid a salary by the Oriental Institute during a considerable portion of the time in which you were working on the material which has gone into this manuscript, you appear to condescend to allow us to publish work in which we, also, have some vested interest. When, finally, threats are added to condescension, it becomes crystal clear that you do not wish to see the imprimatur of the Oriental Institute on your book. . . . As I return your manuscript, I can only hope that it may not go into limbo solely through the unreasonableness of its author.[92]

By the end of the year, a letter referred simply to "the Caminos affair."[93] The manuscript was published the following year in the Analecta Orientalia series in Rome—as Hughes wryly commented, "So it is the Pope's outfit that is going to publish it." He was prepared for the worst from Caminos: "I have braced myself for the haymaker at the Institute and this expedition in particular in the preface or introduction. The best I can hope for is the complete and absolute ignoring of the ancestry of the work."[94] In fact, the preface to Caminos's book threw no punches at the Institute, but it justified his decision to publish elsewhere by commenting that his work with the Survey "left him no time to work on my manuscript," sidestepping the fact that he had worked on the texts while in Luxor and that his translations were intended to be part of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* II and then III (*The Bubastite Portal*).*

There remained the texts of the Shoshenq triumphal scene(s) that were Hughes's responsibility. These texts included a list of sites that Shoshenq conquered in Palestine—one of the most important correlations between Egyptian and biblical historical accounts. Hughes had done considerable work on the texts, but he discussed doing a scaled-down, nonepigraphic publication: "Maybe we ought to publish the geographical list with our epigraphic notes separately as something the Asiatic boys would go for without having to take a lot of stuff they wouldn't have a clue to."[95] But his publication became a moot point in 1957 when Benjamin Mazar presented his paper "The Campaigns of Pharaoh Shishak to Palestine" at the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament.[96] Hughes considered that Mazar's publication contained many of the same ideas as his own study, and he did not further pursue the topic.[97]

The Khonsu Temple, 1935–2014

After three years working at the Ramesses III temples in the Karnak complex, Nelson started looking for additional projects. In 1934, he discussed options with Henri Chevrier, the chief of works at Karnak, who suggested the Khonsu Temple (fig. 5.6; plan 2), a project that Chevrier had thought he would undertake himself. Nelson preferred the Hypostyle Hall, but Chevrier refused to grant permission for that structure; so, from October 1935, the team moved to Khonsu.[98] The temple, which was very understudied, did appeal to Nelson because it was another "complete temple" built by Ramesses III that would add to the portfolio of monuments of that king, and he felt that the subject matter of the reliefs was interesting. As part of this plan, Nelson also considered documenting the tomb of Ramesses III in the Valley of the Kings (KV 11).[99]

* This plan was acknowledged by Caminos in early 1957, when he referred to "work the Institute had asked me to undertake with a view to supplying the *Bubastite Portal* volume with a translation and commentary to be published by the Oriental Institute in book form." Caminos to Seele, 24 February 1957, ISAC Museum Archives.

The Khonsu Temple was built by Ramesses III almost entirely of reused blocks, and little of the relief work (other than on the walls of most of the chapels around the sanctuary; fig. 5.9) was executed by him. The sanctuary has fine relief work of Ramesses IV (fig. 5.10), who also was responsible for some of the elements of the painted side chapels. The Court was decorated by the military general/high priest Herihor at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, and the Hypostyle Hall by Ramesses XI and Herihor with many additions by Pinudjem in the early Twenty-First Dynasty. There are Ptolemaic additions to the relief work. The temple thus presented a much more complicated situation than previous Survey projects had, because many historical issues of the end of the Twentieth Dynasty had to be addressed.

Figure 5.9. Ramesses III presenting flowers in chapel 12 of the Khonsu Temple. The chapels were cleaned by the American Research Center in Egypt in 2008. Photo: O. Murray, ARCE.

Figure 5.10. Finely cut relief of Ramesses IV in the ambulatory of the sanctuary of the Khonsu Temple, showing the king offering food to Khonsu, 1932–35. Photo: H. Leichter.

Another challenge was that the relief work was difficult to see because it was obscured by layers of soot, bat guano, and grime. In 1935, the staff commented that the "walls at the Temple of Khonsu were the most difficult subjects with which they had dealt." Leichter also had problems photographing the walls of the Court because they were "screened" by the thick and closely spaced columns.[100] In 1936, some cleaning was done, revealing "a mass of colored details that no one has ever seen before for hundreds of years."[101]

Artist Canziani began drawing the reliefs in 1935, finishing three of them in 1936.[102] By 1939, Nelson reported, the entire temple, other than the columns and architraves, had been photographed.[103] The 1939 season included Richard Parker as epigrapher; he had an interest and expertise in Ptolemaic

texts and was, Nelson wrote, the first Survey member "who could really handle it competently." His skills were valuable for analyzing the work of Sethe, who had earlier studied the late texts.[104]

Only a year after the project started, Nelson seemed to have second thoughts about it, and in January 1936 he suggested to Wilson that the material from the temple be published as "journal articles or little studies on special subjects" because "we are not distributing our large publications very rapidly, and we might in this way reach a larger public than we could with larger and more costly folios."[105] This lack of what might be viewed as a total commitment to the project manifested itself several times over the years and may explain why the Khonsu publications did not appear until 1979 and 1981, and why the temple was not more thoroughly documented. Khonsu seemed to have been regarded as the unattractive stepsister of Medinet Habu.

The Survey returned to the Khonsu Temple when it resumed work in October 1946 following World War II.[106] At that time (although perhaps also earlier), the Survey would work at Khonsu early in the season until the inundation level dropped enough for the team to be able to reach Medinet Habu.[107] In the 1947 season, they were copying the Opet scenes on the lower part of the west wall of the Court and "a few scenes of Ramesses III in the rearmost rooms." Work continued to be impeded by the condition of the walls: "The ruinous condition of the wall and the smoke and grime which covered the preserved surfaces, make the work of drawing and checking the scene exceptionally difficult, but very satisfactory progress has been made and it is hoped to finish this important scene in the coming season."[108]

Work at Khonsu came to a standstill again in 1949 as the team turned exclusively to Medinet Habu through the 1950s. In the early 1960s, Khonsu was apparently an even more distant priority as the Survey took on the tomb of Kheruef and the temple at Beit el-Wali (see chapter 7, "The Tomb of Kheruef, 1954–1980," and chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963"). In 1967, however, field director Nims showed renewed interest in the temple, and he applied for permission to resume work at the site. But there was a complication: the French rights to work in the Karnak complex had been restored as partners in the newly founded Franco-Egyptian Mission (Centre Franco-Égyptien d'Étude des Temples de Karnak).* Nims wrote to Oriental Institute director Robert Adams, "There may be a small problem. Apparently when the agreement was signed with the French for their restoration at Karnak, it was stipulated that any work there must be accepted by the French and approved by the high committee of antiquities. While I do not expect any difficulty on this matter, we will have to work in cooperation with the French and be ready to move elsewhere should they wish to work at the Temple of Khonsu."[109]

Chicago was granted permission to return to Khonsu, and work began in earnest in the 1967 season.† By March 1968, Nims was able to report that "our efforts are concentrated" on that site.[110]

The 1967 season vindicated the historical importance of the temple reliefs when artist Reg Coleman and epigrapher Ed Wente, while working on a scene of a procession of the family of Herihor on the west wall of the portico, found that the mid-nineteenth-century copy of Lepsius was incorrect.[111] He mistook an area that he thought should record the beginning of the name of the son as being damaged, followed by *ankh*, and on that basis the name was restored as [Pi]ankh, the high priest of Amun at Karnak. As this interpretation made him the son of Herihor, the revelation created a clear

* French permission to work at the site (and throughout Egypt) had been revoked as a result of the Suez Crisis (Thompson, *Wonderful Things*, vol. 3, 263, 305, 341), but also in 1952 because of a dispute over their refusal to allow the Egyptians to establish an institute of Islamic studies in Tunis.

† The *Archeological Newsletter* (15 February 1968) reports, "It was possible for us to return, in December 1966, to the Khonsu Temple. Shortly this will have the full attention of the whole staff." But it appears that permission was not received until 1967, apparently when the temple received "the full attention" of the Survey.

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succession between the Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Dynasties at Thebes. However, on closer inspection there was no damage, no initial glyphs were lost, the name actually began (not ended) with *ankh*—hence, Ankhefenmut—and the evidence for a filial relationship between Herihor and Piankh vanished.[112]

The last few years of Nims's tenure as field director were spent working primarily at Khonsu. In 1968, he was able to report that most of the Hypostyle Hall, other than the doorways, the architraves, and the abaci above the columns, were recorded. The reliefs on the round, tapered columns presented special problems. Tracing paper was tried but proved too opaque, so the team switched to clear plastic sheeting and "lithographic wax pencils." By the end of that season, Nims was less upbeat, reporting, "The reliefs on the eight columns in the first hypostyle hall have been traced, but there are twenty-eight in the court yet to be done."[113]

The condition of the walls continued to pose challenges. The many traces of painted detail that had embellished the carved decoration were "obscured by grime—smoke, mud, and the droppings of birds and bats. Some of the soil comes from the mudbrick houses which once stood in the Court. It takes the artist considerable time to clean the reliefs with the judicious use of brush and water, and the work is too delicate to trust to unskilled hands." Abdel Karim Medhat, a conservator who had recently retired from the Egyptian Antiquities Service, was hired to clean the walls, and, as Nims wrote, "In the week he has been working the results are spectacular. Until further dirt collects on the wall something of the original brightness of the color will be seen. Many of the details are so small that they must be viewed at close range." They continued to comment how difficult the work was: "The defacement of the faces and limbs of all the figures on the walls of the court and first hypostyle hall of the temple does tax the abilities of both artist and Egyptologist. Together they strive to recover the last trace of original relief. Moreover, the sculptors' work is so irregular that it is often problematic as to just where the lines should be drawn. Certainly the final drawings are clearer than the wall itself; this end is our purpose."[114] Clearly, it was not so enjoyable to work on dirty, fragmentary reliefs.

In 1971, Nims wrote that although they had hoped to finish the Hypostyle Hall and Court that season, "it now appears that we may not quite make it. The scenes about the great doorways and the marginal inscriptions, such as those on the architraves, will take some time to complete, and we were unable to complete the photography of the architraves during the present season. But by April 15, 1972, all the remaining work in the two areas mentioned should be well under way."[115]

The Survey worked exclusively in the Court and Hypostyle Hall of Khonsu during the 1972 and 1973 seasons, which included the transition from Nims to Wente as field director. The subject matter of the temple was a perfect fit for Wente, whose academic specialty was the language and history of the late New Kingdom. Although he served as field director for only a season and a half, he contributed much to the interpretation of the Khonsu reliefs, both in their final publication and in articles published elsewhere (as Nelson had suggested doing in 1936).[116] However, he encountered a distinct lack of enthusiasm on the part of some of the epigraphers, who apparently wanted to work elsewhere. Wente reported to former field director Hughes, "I have been getting a barrage of unsolicited advice concerning . . . what projects we should be undertaking to supplement the recording of Khonsu. It has been suggested that we should devote only four days per week to Khonsu." Chuck Van Siclen was especially vocal; according to Wente, he did "not see the value of continuing to record offering scenes in the Khonsu temple."[117] This opinion may have been a reaction to Wente's insistence that "even minor inscriptions" be fully documented because they might illuminate the many historical problems revolving around Herihor's career. They included "various odds and ends" whose importance was apparently not appreciated by the entire staff.[118]

Finally, in 1973, during Kent Weeks's first season as field director, work on Khonsu was brought to a "temporary close."

In the mid-1970s, Egyptology graduate students at the Oriental Institute embraced the Khonsu project—or at least Herihor, perhaps because of his amusing-sounding name—and named their softball team the Herihors, with team shirts designed by (future field director) Ray Johnson showing the frontal-face *ḥr* hieroglyph with an askew baseball cap and a baseball bat tucked under the Horus falcon's wing (fig. 5.11).

The Survey returned to Khonsu in 2008 for a joint project of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) that lasted through the 2014 season, with the Chicago staff working at Khonsu for one month of their field season. As part of its East Bank Groundwater Lowering Response Initiative, ARCE undertook conservation and restoration in the Khonsu Temple (see fig. 5.9) and trained Egyptians specialized in both disciplines. The work, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), entailed the replacement of missing paving stone along the main axis of the temple to facilitate tourist visits. Because Ramesses III built the temple almost entirely of blocks reused from other structures, as the paving stones were pulled up to stabilize the floor, earlier decoration was discovered on their sides (fig. 5.12). This relief work was traced on transparent film, scanned, collated, and cataloged before the blocks were covered by the new paving. Among the earlier kings attested are Thutmose II, Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III, Amenhotep IV, Aye, Horemheb, Sety I, Ramesses II, and Sety II; some limestone blocks appear to date back to the Middle Kingdom.

In the 2009 season, a new component of documentation was introduced as epigrapher Jen Kimpton produced isometric drawings of blocks with architectural details to allow their original context to be studied. It now appears that some of the blocks came from a small, square-pillared sanctuary to Khonsu built by Thutmose III. Some

Figure 5.11. Kathy Dorman (later *mudira* of Chicago House) in a Herihor softball team shirt, designed by future field director Ray Johnson, ca. 1976. Photo: P. Dorman.

decorated surfaces of reused blocks could be seen embedded in the walls where it was impossible to expose the surface for tracing or scanning. The artists were able to document their decoration by inserting a sheet of foil into the space between the blocks and smoothing it over the reliefs to create an impression (fig 5.13). More than 450 blocks were documented during the six-year collaboration, and several reports on the work were published.[119]

Publication of the Khonsu Temple

In 1973, the work in the Court and Hypostyle Hall was completed, and the manuscripts entered the often-protracted period of being finalized for publication.

The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 1: Scenes of King Herihor in the Court (OIP 100) appeared in 1979. Wente's preface is dated April 1973, six years before the volume actually appeared. The 110 boxed plates were accompanied by a fifty-five-page

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Figure 5.12. Reused paving stone in Khonsu Temple with earlier decoration on its side, ca. 2009. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

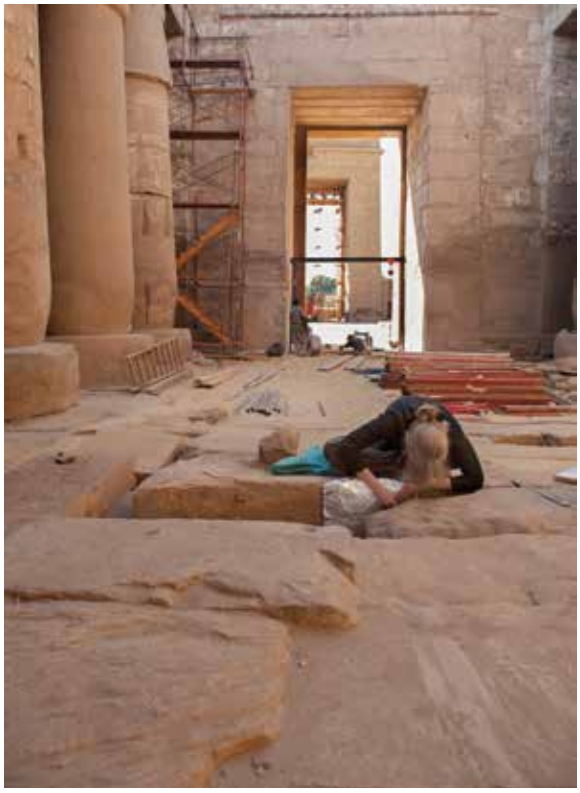

Figure 5.13. Artist Keli Alberts documenting carved decoration between blocks using a sheet of metal foil, 2009. Photo: ARCE.

booklet that included translations of the texts, also by Wente. The sheets in the folio measured 38 × 48 centimeters.

Because the production of drawings was stopped and started under different field directors over more than forty years, it is not surprising that many compromises were made to reduce additional delays and costs. Foremost is the inconsistency in how the artists represented damage on the wall. From the early days of the Survey, damage was represented by shading; then, in the years just before and after World War II, a different convention was introduced: the use of broken lines. When Nims became field director in 1964, he reverted to the use of shading because "it is often extremely difficult for the artist to determine precisely where the broken line should be drawn. Frequently, breaks in the wall are merely small patches of missing surface, so that an intelligible indication of the damaged area by this method is practically impossible."[120]

Another, perhaps greater, issue was the convention for indicating sunk versus raised relief. Before 1961, the Survey used a weighted line to indicate shadow and an unweighted line for sun,

the underlying idea being that the light source was at the lower right. After that time, the convention was reversed, with drawings rendered as though the light source was at the upper left. In the new system, "a heavier line indicates a shadow, representing the left or upper edge of an incised cut, and a lighter sun line indicates the right or bottom edge of an incised cut."* The drawings for Khonsu employed both conventions, but again, it was decided that redoing the old drawings would incur too much expense and delay. The preface rather unhappily comments, "Because plates in the present volume and the one to follow were prepared . . . after the change in our conventions for rendering the two types of Egyptian relief, it will, alas, not be easy for the reader to determine the nature of the original relief solely from an examination of the plate." On a more chipper note, all the reliefs in the Court and portico and on their columns are "fortunately" in sunk relief, though the preface goes on to point out areas in raised relief and the many exceptions to those generalizations.[121]

The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 2: Scenes and Inscriptions in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall (OIP 103) appeared in 1981 and followed the same format as *Khonsu* 1. It contained ninety-seven plates and a ninety-three-page booklet that included translations, a glossary to *Khonsu* 1 and 2, and indexes of royal and nonroyal personal names, all of which were "largely the work" of William Murnane. Although *Khonsu* 2 was published while Lanny Bell was field director, Weeks (field director in 1973–75) wrote the preface. He seems an odd choice for that task because he had only passing involvement with the Khonsu project (just "cleaning up" in the 1973 season), and by the time *Khonsu* 2 appeared in 1981, he had already been at the University of California, Berkeley, for six years. In contrast, Nims had worked on the project every season the Survey worked at Khonsu since 1935, so it is curious that he did not write the preface to either volume.

The staff list in the Khonsu volumes is enormous because of the many years it took to produce them. But determining who actually worked on the project is impossible because the list of "Members of the Staff of the Epigraphic Survey Who Participated in the Preparation of This Volume" in *Khonsu* 2 includes all the staff over the years with the dates of their overall service, not the years they worked specifically at Khonsu (as opposed to Medinet Habu, Kheruef, or Beit el-Wali). For example, Keith Seele is credited as 1929–36, although the work did not start at Khonsu until 1935. But as can be reconstructed by reports and letters, the epigraphers before World War II were Nelson, Seele, Parker, and perhaps Schott; the artists were Canziani and Shepherd; and Leichter was photographer. Following the war (in 1947 and 1948), Nims and Parker worked on the texts. The artists were Shepherd and probably Champion. Nims had taken over photography. Epigraphers in the late 1960s and early 1970s seem to have been Nims, Wente, Van Siclen, Murnane, David Larkin, and Carl DeVries; the artists were Coleman, Grace Huxtable, and Martyn Lack;[122] and Nims was still photographer.

A volume on the architecture of the Khonsu Temple authored by Françoise Laroche-Traunecker of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak, and referred to in correspondence as "*Khonsu* 3," has yet to appear. In 1973, an agreement was signed between Weeks and the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak for a publication on the architecture of the temple to be published in the *Khonsu* series—very much in keeping with Weeks's interest in adding an architectural component to the epigraphic work.† In his introduction to *Khonsu* 2 (p. xx), dated 1980, Weeks announced the third volume, and in 1981, Bell did likewise, forecasting that *Khonsu* 3 would appear after *The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (published in 1986).[123]

Traunecker finished the research in 1984, but then the project stalled for many years. As late as

* This change was "insisted on" by Keith Seele and instituted for the Beit el-Wali publication that appeared in 1967.

† See *AR* 1974–75 and *AR* 1975–76, where the reports from Luxor are titled "The Epigraphic and Architectural Survey."

2017, in notes in other publications, she referred to the forthcoming volume (to appear as *Khonsu* 4 or 5), and again in 2020,[124] but since there was no communication between the author and Chicago, the Survey assumed the project was no longer viable. Then, in 2021, Traunecker contacted field director Brett McClain and expressed an interest in reviving the project that then consisted of detailed plans and elevations of the temple with technical remarks about the construction, as well as nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century photos of the structure. However, in the meantime, ARCE completed a full 3D computer scan of the temple, digitally recording all its surfaces at high resolution, so the Survey will have to decide the best way to present the architectural history of the temple.

In 2003, *Khonsu* 3 did in fact appear, but as *The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak: A Manifestation of Personal Piety* (OIP 123) by Helen Jacquet-Gordon. The research for the book was done in 1955 and 1956, and resumed in 1986 through an ARCE research grant. Bell suggested that the work—which was well known and highly anticipated in the field—could be published in the *Khonsu* series. Johnson saw it through to publication during the years that Jacquet-Gordon and her husband, Jean Jacquet, resided at Chicago House. Survey staff Tom Van Eynde and Yarko Kobylecky finalized the photography, and Sue Lezon did the layout. *Khonsu* 3 consists of 119 pages of text and 126 plates bound in the dark-brown and tan cloth boards of the OIP series. At 29 × 40 centimeters, the trim size was smaller than *Khonsu* 1 and 2.

The Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, 1938-1940, 1947-1950

In 1930, the Oriental Institute received the concession to work on the Ramesses III temples at Karnak and the Bubastite Portal. As 1933 was ending, Nelson, in his discussions about expanding the work at the site, mused about the Hypostyle Hall (fig. 5.14; plan 2): "I'm thinking of asking for the great hypostyle hall. I wonder if Lacau would let us have it. It would be a wonderful job and one needing greatly to be done. And only an organization such as ours could tackle it."[125] Breasted replied, "I should think it is a good idea to get into the big hall at Karnak."[126] Nelson approached Chevrier about work there in early 1934; as he reported to Breasted, "While talking to Chevrier, I mentioned that we expected to have completed the copying of the [Ramesses III] temple by the end of this season and would be applying for a further concession . . . he asked what we thought of doing and I replied that the Hypostyle Hall was the part I wanted most to do."[127] But work did not begin in the hall until 1938, well after work at Khonsu was underway.

The Hypostyle Hall project differed from previous ones. It did not involve the full team of epigraphers and artists; rather, it was a personal project of Nelson's. Through the mid- and late 1920s into the 1930s, Nelson had commented, and complained, that the demands of overseeing the construction and administration of the two

Figure 5.14. View of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, 1930s. Photo: H. Leichter.

Chicago Houses left him very little time for serious academic work. He was unable even to set aside time to write the commentary on several volumes that he envisioned. Breasted, and later Wilson, sympathized with Nelson and supported him, allowing him to hire a house manager for the Luxor house (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–") while encouraging him to take on a project that would be more exclusively his.

Nelson started copying the reliefs in the Hypostyle Hall in early 1938. He reported that the work was made difficult by an unusually high Nile: "Karnak is thoroughly wet. In the Hypostyle Hall the ground is too soft to work on. In fact I went in nearly to my knees and only saved myself from going further by clasping one of the beams supporting the columns where Chevrier was working last season. I had to give up working in the Hall and turn my attention elsewhere, but the whole temple is so wet it is difficult to find a place in which to work."[128]

By March 1938, Nelson reported to Wilson, "I have been pushing the work I undertook in the hypostyle hall at Karnak as fast as the time at my disposal will allow. . . . By my working seven days in the week and most weeks, for seven evenings till late, I have been able to get a good deal of work done. But it is very tiring and shows." By then, he had drawn nearly all the scenes and about half the columns. Nims had been helping him with collations on Sunday mornings. Nelson noted, "I think it will be a very interesting publication when I get it done."[129]

Wilson continued to encourage Nelson, suggesting that he direct his staff—reduced by budget cuts to Canziani, Nims, Parker, and Leichter—to work at the Bubastite Portal and the Khonsu Temple, "exercising only a general oversight, and finish your work on the Hypostyle Hall and devote yourself to any other publication which you may wish."[130]

In early 1939, Nelson reported to Wilson, "My work in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak is going on, and if there are not too many interruptions during the remainder of the year, the material should be in hand by the end of this season. I could not possibly have it ready for publication this summer, as all the large amount of inscriptions must be autographed for printing and the whole thoroughly indexed, this in addition to editorial comment."[131] At the end of the season, he wrote, "I am making a few last visits to the Hypostyle Hall, which will mean that I now have completed my work there."[132]

By early May 1940, just as Chicago House was closing for an unknown duration for World War II, Nelson wrote to Wilson that he had only one more morning's work left in the hall before he felt that that he was really done. His enthusiasm, at least for the craftsmanship, seems to have waned, for he wrote, "What a dreary lot of hot air it is after all. I have recently been working over the Ramses II inscriptions on the architraves of the south half of the hall. They are the most slovenly work in the whole of Karnak. I am referring to the technique of the stonecutter. In most, if not all, cases, Ramses II's work is inferior even to that of Ramses IV."[133]

Because this project was a personal one, Nelson worked without the aid of the Survey's artists, but he followed a streamlined Chicago House Method. He drew on a photographic enlargement, penciling the lines and then inking them before the photo emulsion was bleached away. He also produced a translation of the texts and wrote a brief commentary.[134]

Nelson returned to Luxor in 1945 to reopen Chicago House and prepare for the resumption of work. He retired at the end of the following season, fully expecting to return to Luxor to finish his project. Wilson, however, had the unpleasant duty of informing him that because of budget constraints, the University of Chicago's "central administration" had informed him it would pay Nelson's room and board in Luxor, but it would not cover his (or his wife Libbie's) international travel. Further, the university stipulated that Nelson's presence at the house, and hence his room and board, was contingent on his project being "directly associated with the work of the Epigraphic Survey." They further questioned "why you could not carry out such a

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proposition in Chicago rather than in Luxor," and they expressed "the opinion that such work might reasonably be carried on in Chicago."[135]

Not surprisingly, Nelson, after serving as field director for more than twenty years and having run the house since it was built, took offense that he should be asked to justify the value of his work, much less the cost of his modest room and board. He wrote to Wilson:

> If I return next season, as I hope to do, I now feel that I would wish to be free to do what I want to do and only as much as I want to do. Were I to come out on a "subsidy" I would feel that I must put in full time on that one project alone throughout the whole period of my stay and even after my return until the publication was ready. The opinion that central administration expressed that my work on the Hypostyle Hall "might reasonably be carried on in Chicago" shows a strange misunderstanding of the project. How am I to copy, check and recheck the reliefs and inscriptions in that vast hall from the distance of many thousand miles? I would not dare publish my present copies nor will I have time to do the necessary work that remains to be done here on the spot and only here between now and the end of the present season. If I do not return next season, the publication of the Hall must be dropped from my programme. Here one learns that copies may be made only "in front of the wall."[136]

Wilson discussed the matter further with the university's administration, which again responded that financial support for Nelson's season in Luxor would be dependent on him demonstrating that the Hypostyle Hall project was part of a "major undertaking of the Oriental Institute" and not a piece of "personal research."[137] On Wilson's recommendation, Nelson was forced to make his case to Thorkild Jacobsen, the director of the Oriental Institute, even pointing out that he and Libbie had saved the Institute airfare by not traveling home the previous summer.[138] In April, after a series of humiliating exchanges, the university approved the Nelsons' travel and expenses on the condition that the project be completed in one year.[139]

So, Nelson spent the 1948 season in Luxor checking his drawings of the hall. At the end of this last season, he was understandably conflicted, writing to Doris Fessler, secretary to the director of the Oriental Institute, "I shall miss the facilities for work that we have here. One can do twice as much here as possible at Chicago. Sometimes I want never to see the place again, and sometimes I know I shall miss it greatly. I presume my feelings in the matter as largely conditioned on the amount of pep I have at my disposal at any one time. Mrs. Nelson will be delighted to say goodbye to Egypt."[140]

This reluctance on the part of the university to fund Nelson's final season—on a project that Breasted and Wilson urged him to undertake as a reward for his extraordinary service—was a sorry recompense for his enormous and many contributions. But there was one more hurtful event: his manuscript on the Hypostyle Hall was rejected by the Oriental Institute's publications committee. In a letter to Fessler, field director Hughes referred to the rejection, saying that he did not know the reason (or reasons) for it but Nelson was "so low in spirit it makes me feel most sorry for him," and "it was pitiful to hear from him that his incentive was gone."[141]

Nelson's unpublished manuscript and notes were deposited in the Oriental Institute archive and apparently forgotten until Murnane (fig. 5.15), then an epigrapher for the Survey, edited them in 1977–80 and published them in 1981 as *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak—Volume I, Part 1: The Wall Reliefs* (OIP 106).[142] In the publication, Murnane mentioned that "a companion volume, currently under preparation, will supply epigraphic information not conveyed by the drawings themselves, along with the translations and other critical apparatus."[143] That volume did not appear. Murnane commented on the plusses and minuses of the publication, the former being that the sketches

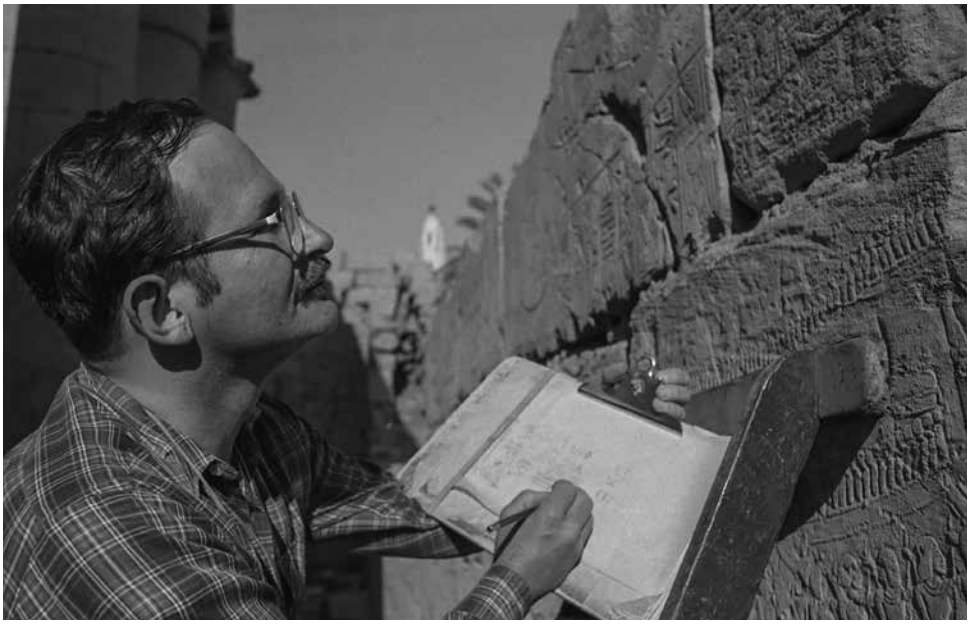

Figure 5.15. William Murnane, Survey epigrapher who edited and published Harold Nelson's work on the Hypostyle Hall, 1984. Photo: S. Lezon.

manage to capture "the essential characteristics of the decoration," the latter including a lack of detail in the drawings or full indication of recutting.

In 1987, Murnane moved to the University of Memphis, and the Hypostyle Hall project went with him. After Murnane's death in 2000, his colleague Peter J. Brand took over the project. In 2009, Brand rediscovered Nelson's manuscript of commentary and translations in the archive of the Oriental Institute, a work that was apparently unknown to Murnane. A new edition of the Hypostyle Hall reliefs with new photography and full translation and commentary by Brand and Rosa E. Feleg (as coauthors with Murnane) was published by the Oriental Institute in 2018 as *The Great Hypostyle Hall in the Temple of Amun at Karnak—Volume I, Part 2: Translation and Commentary* and *Part 3: Figures and Plates* (both OIP 142), thereby completing the project envisioned by Breasted in 1933 and implemented by Nelson in 1938.

Nelson's *Key Plans*

Nelson's *Key Plans*—a series of plans and elevations of the walls of the temples in the Theban region, with numbers to which the scenes shown there can be referenced—is an amazingly ambitious and useful publication done "as another side project."

The forerunner of the project began in 1924 as a necessity, just months after the Survey began work at Medinet Habu (see chapter 3, "Medinet Habu, 1924–"). Breasted told Nelson that until a new plan of the Great Temple could be made, they might use a copy of a plan in the Haskell Museum library* on which Nelson and his team could plot the location of the texts and reliefs.[144] That year, Nelson reported to Oriental Institute Egyptologist T. G. Allen that he had made an entirely new plan by measuring the walls and drawing elevations. The elevations were divided into sections corresponding to an individual scene or group of scenes, and each was assigned a number to which the Survey's negatives, prints, and drawings could be referenced. Nelson stated that he intended to expand the project to the entire complex.[145] With the advent of the

* The Department of Semitic Languages and Literatures (the forerunner of the Oriental Institute) and its library were housed in Haskell Hall on the University of Chicago campus.

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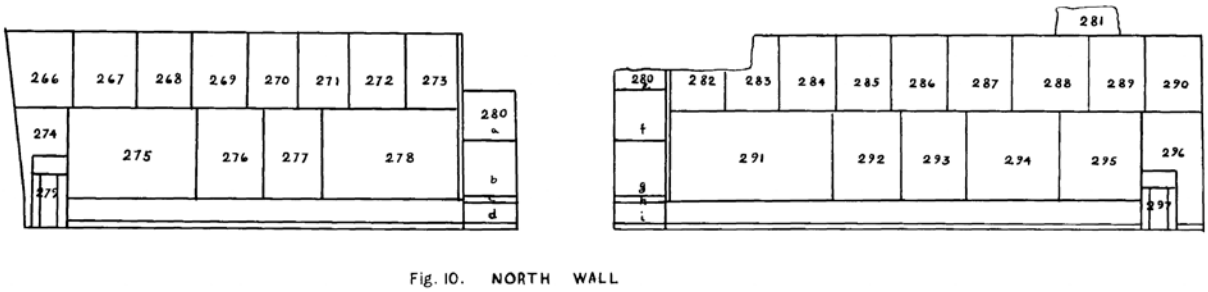

Figure 5.16. Plate from Nelson's *Key Plans* showing how the locations of scenes on the interior north wall of the Hypostyle Hall were assigned numbers. Nelson, *Key Plans*, pl. IV, fig. 10.

Architectural Survey in 1926 under architect Uvo Hölscher, a new level of precision was added to the mapping of Medinet Habu. Nelson undertook the project not only to record the locations of the Survey's photographs but also for another of his own projects, an analytical catalog of iconography of the reliefs in Theban temples.*

Nelson's plotting of the scenes as a means of keeping track of their photography proved to be so useful at Medinet Habu that by 1930, when the Survey began work at Karnak, Breasted expressed hope that the same could be done for that site. Just as he aspired to document much of the complex (see this chapter's introductory section), Breasted hoped Nelson would likewise plot more than just the immediate project at the Ramesses III temple in the First Court, the Ramesses temple at the Mut Temple, and the Bubastite Portal. Nelson replied, "As for making a similar layout for Karnak to that which I have made of Medinet Habu, I doubt if you realize what an order that would be. Of course I shall begin that work as soon as we secure a concession, but it will take a very long time to do it. . . . The mere measuring of all the reliefs and inscriptions to secure data for the layout is in itself a large undertaking. But once the survey is made it is a very useful piece of work."[146]

Nelson's key-plan system assigns each Theban monument an alphabetic identifier. For example, the vast Karnak complex is "K." Each of its many architectural components was assigned a similar designation—its Hypostyle Hall is "B." Each wall or section of a wall, and each column or pillar face, was assigned a number.† Hence, KB 278 is the west side of the north wall of the Karnak Hypostyle Hall, just to the west of the doorway (fig. 5.16).

Nelson worked on his key plans through the 1930s. By 1937, he sent blueprints of the plans for Khonsu Temple to Chicago,[147] and in early 1939, he reported, "I have been checking up on our existing plans with the help of Nims and Parker and already have a new and, I hope, final plan of the Great Temple [at Medinet Habu] ready. The remainder of the buildings are not yet thoroughly checked. . . . I am trying to do a thorough job this time and that requires some time."[148] By April 1940, he was able to deliver "17 blueprints of temple plans I have drawn, being the first installment of thirty-seven such plans." He noted that he had "tried to indicate by number on these plans the location of every bit of inscription or relief which survives in the walls and some day I wish to publish a catalog of the material."‡ Although he tried to work on the key plans and his analytical catalog simultaneously, the plans were a priority: "Most of these plans I have drawn this season and this work has prevented me from

* This catalog did not reach the publication stage. See further in "Richard Parker, George Hughes, and the Postwar Years, 1945–1963" in chapter 3.

† Dividing large temples, or complexes, into sections was done to avoid four-digit numbers for the scenes.

‡ A reference to Nelson's never-published "Analytical Catalog." In the introduction to *Key Plans* (p. vii), he notes that the plans were a "necessary preliminary" to his catalog.

doing more than completing the gathering of material in the Hypostyle Hall and making considerable progress with the remainder of the Amon Temple at Karnak. It will take several years yet before the whole job is completed. Meanwhile the plans will make our photographs most useful at any rate."[149] By May 1940, Nelson had sent the last twenty plans off to Chicago for publication.[150]

Key Plans Showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations (OIP 56) appeared in 1941, consisting of thirty-eight plates in a portfolio of plain boards with an orange buckram spine. In the preface, Nelson commented that the plans, "in most instances, are not based on exact surveys of the various buildings. Architecturally correct plans exist for only a few of the temples, a notable exception to the general inexactitude being furnished by the excellent plans prepared by Professor Hölscher and his assistants at Medinet Habu." The plans of the other temples were Nelson's own work, assisted by Survey members Keith Seele, Siegfried Schott, Charles Nims, and Richard Parker. In his preface, Nelson also commented that Walter W. Romig at the Oriental Institute corrected the drawings, "a contribution plainly visible on every plate in the contrast between his skilled draftsmanship of title and numbers and the author's own efforts in the same field."

The sections of Theban temples recorded by the Survey (Medinet Habu and parts of the Ramesseum and the Karnak complex) obviously were priorities for *Key Plans*, but the final publication included Medinet Habu, all of Karnak, Luxor Temple, the Ramesseum, Deir el-Bahari, the Gourna temple of Sety I, Kasr el-Aguz, Deir el-Shelwit (today, Deir el-Shaweit), and the tomb of Ramesses III. The latter, the only tomb, was included because the Survey once planned to publish it as part of its portfolio of monuments of that king.*

Sometime after *Key Plans* appeared, errors were noted, and by January 1946, Nelson had begun revisions. That month he wrote from Luxor, "I am glad to get the plans for I am sure they need considerable checking though I hope not as much as I fear," closing the letter with "I was so pleased to receive them that I at once rushed off and had my hair cut, a sure sign of an uplift of spirit."[151] By the end of the year, he started returning corrections to the publications office in Chicago.[152]

The revised *Key Plans* was published in 1965, ten years after Nelson's death.† Nims handled the last stages of the revision, working with Elizabeth Hauser in the publications office.[153]

Nelson's *Key Plans* provides the essential framework for the operations of the Epigraphic Survey, because all its negatives, prints, and drawings are recorded and traced by their Nelson number. Only when an image is published does its plate number become the primary reference. Recent publications provide a concordance of each plate to its Nelson number for easy cross-referencing.

Key Plans and the *Topographical Bibliography*

Nelson worked closely with Rosalind Porter and Bertha Moss on their *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and*

* In 1930, Nelson suggested to Breasted that "we ask for permission to publish the tomb of Ramses III as a completion of the M.H. work. There is some very fine color in the tomb and it would fit in very well with the rest of our Ramses III material both at M.H. and across the river at Karnak" (20 January 1930, CHP 199). By 1941, when *Key Plans* was published, the reason the tomb was included with all the temples was more noncommittal: "It was inserted for the benefit of the Oriental Institute's Epigraphic Survey before publication of the plans was contemplated. Although it is not a temple, it is felt that its retention can do no harm and that it may be of some use" (*Key Plans*, vii n1).

† The scan of the book on the ISAC website bears the following notation in pencil: "Reprinted 1965 with correction to pl. XIV" ("Karnak. Precinct of Amon. Section O. Miscellaneous Structures").

Paintings,* an indispensable reference that briefly describes the subject matter of the scenes on the walls of monuments. Nelson provided a plan and the location of scenes on the walls of Medinet Habu for the first edition of their volume on Theban temples, which appeared in 1929, and Moss acknowledged his help clearing "up the many doubtful points."[154] In that edition, the scenes were referenced to older works by Lepsius, Duemichen, Champollion, *Baedeker's Egypt*, and unpublished manuscripts of Wilkinson, de Rougé, and others.†

As Chicago House gradually amassed a huge number of photos of the Theban monuments, Nelson recognized the shortcomings of the first edition of the *Topographical Bibliography*, writing to Breasted:

> It has been forced upon our attention that there are many errors in the Bibliography, as published. The work has been, I fear, too large for the small force which has handled the project. No one could be more intelligent or more devoted than Miss Moss, but her publications will certainly need careful revision. The more of this material I compare with the walls of the temples, the more I am astounded at the extraordinary errors made by copyists, both old and more recent. In all the publications, with a few exceptions, reliefs are misplaced, reversed, wrongly combined, and distorted beyond all recognition.

The key to accuracy was the use of photos, and Nelson noted, "It is fortunate for us in our publication work that we have so much original material here at hand for purposes of comparison, without having to resort to more or less unreliable publications."[155]

The second edition of the *Topographical Bibliography* volume on Theban temples (1972) continued to use its own numbering system, but Nelson *Key Plans* numbers are also given as secondary references with the "Chic. Or. Inst." photo number.

Now, more than eighty years after its first appearance, *Key Plans* has taken on new importance and utility in the digital age, as the Survey has made its collection of more than 17,000 large-format negatives available via the ISAC website, all of them indexed through Nelson's numbering system. It is an easy matter to check the exact details of scenes on the walls of Theban temples, rather than try to consult hard-to-access publications that may not accurately record the reliefs. To make the process even easier, *The Registry of the Photographic Archive of the Epigraphic Survey* (OIC 27) was published in 1995. It lists the field photos (and the dimensions of their negatives) by Nelson number location, making it a quicker and more accurate reference than Porter and Moss. In addition, making it even more convenient, Nelson's *Key Plans* was reproduced at smaller scale in the *Registry*. That publication, like all volumes published by the Oriental Institute, was made available as a free download, making it accessible to anyone with an internet connection.

The Battle Reliefs of Sety I at Karnak, 1973-1976

The battle reliefs of Sety I (ca. 1294–1279 BC) are located on the north side of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak and on its north–south connecting walls (fig. 5.17; plan 2). The upper registers of the scenes had fallen from the wall long ago and were preserved on thirty-four blocks found scattered around Karnak. Survey field director Weeks selected this material as a project because he felt it was historically important, the reliefs were especially endangered by heavy salt incrustations, and if the reliefs were not cleaned and documented, there soon would be nothing remaining on the wall. He further believed this set of reliefs would constitute a

* Now under the editorship of the Griffith Institute, Oxford, the series has grown to include eight volumes (many of them composed of subvolumes). See topbib.griffith.ox.ac.uk/project.html (accessed August 1, 2023).

† In 1934, Nelson and Seele also provided information for the location of scenes in the temple at Edfu, Nelson and Schott for Dendera, and Nelson for Kom Ombo (Nelson to Breasted, 31 December 1934, CHP 1222). That information appeared in 1939 in *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. VI, *Upper Egypt: Chief Temples*.

Figure 5.17. Survey members documenting the battle reliefs of Sety I on the north side of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, showing the king returning to Egypt with foreign prisoners, 1974. Photo: J. Ross.

discrete and fairly rapid project that would result in a publication at a time when the faculty in Chicago was eager to see additional, and more frequent, publications from the Survey.*

Almost no correspondence between Luxor and Chicago survives from this time, so information is sketchy and comes mainly from annual reports. Work began in the 1973 season, when the team was "cleaning up" at Khonsu. In the following season, the team was at work on the Sety reliefs, and they also started the Opet reliefs in Luxor Temple. By spring 1974, the Survey had completed more than one-third of the Sety drawings, and work was essentially finished in the 1976 season.[156]

Weeks noted that this project was different, in that it was one of the few times the Epigraphic Survey had "chosen to deal with only one part of an ancient building rather than with the scenes and texts of an entire monument."[157] He also noted that although the reliefs had previously been published for their historical content, no other expedition had "observed fully the extent of the alterations to which its scenes and texts have been subjected. Nor, unfortunately, have earlier copyists satisfactorily reproduced the high quality of the wall's finely sculpted details."[158]

Weeks was also interested in the material because it held traces of ancient pigments. As he later recalled, "the artists and epigraphers believed Chicago House was well positioned to record those pigments. It would be a great opportunity to study color conventions in Egyptian monumental art. (We could even see publishing a Seti painting as impressive as the one Chicago House did of Medinet Habu's First Pylon.) I regret that we had

* The most recent had been *Medinet Habu* VIII in 1970, and before that, *Beit el-Wali* in 1967 and *Medinet Habu* VII in 1963.

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to abandon the idea because of the time and new methodology it would have required to set up."[159]

The preface to the publication credits essentially the entire staff of the Survey for the past thirty years, but the epigraphers during the 1973–75 seasons were Bill Murnane, James Allen, and Frank Yurco, the latter two advanced graduate students at the University of Chicago. The artists during those seasons were Reg Coleman, Martyn Lack, Clare Sampson, John Romer, and Frank Howard. Since the Survey was also working at Luxor Temple in 1975 and 1976, it is not clear who worked on the Sety drawings, although Weeks cites the work of Lack, Huxtable, and Coleman in particular.[160] The photographer for all Sety seasons was John Ross.

Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I (OIP 107) appeared in 1986. It comprised fifty plates and a 166-page book, enclosed in a box. Because the project was so closely associated with Weeks, he contributed the preface. He credited Murnane as being "largely responsible for the preparation of this volume"[161] and also for the historical analysis that was published separately in 1985 as *The Road to Kadesh: A Historical Interpretation of the Battle Reliefs of King Sety I at Karnak* (SAOC 42) and in several journal articles. Murnane is also credited with the three indexes. The text contained copious commentary on the architectural reconstruction and the use of shrines to enclose some of the reliefs, an extensive discussion of the pigment on the reliefs and individual hieroglyphs, and—for the first time—a chapter on the graffiti, a feature that was to become standard in later publications. The publication cost of the volume was partially underwritten by donations from individual "friends" of Chicago House.

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6 Luxor Temple, 1937, 1975–

The Luxor project has a long history. In January 1930, Harold Nelson wrote to Breasted, "I have always hoped that some day we might do the Luxor Temple [fig. 6.1; plan 3], but that will not be in my time." However, they kept the possibility open in case their request to work at Karnak was denied. As Breasted wrote to Nelson, "I am very glad that we have the Temple of Luxor to fall back on. We can make a very beautiful publication of this place; and, if there should ever be, for any reason, an enforced cessation of work at Karnak, we could always keep busy at Luxor."[1]

In 1931, as the team worked in the Ramesses III temple in the First Court at Karnak with its poorly preserved Opet scenes, the Luxor reliefs again had a special appeal because they preserved elements that were damaged or missing at Karnak (see "The Temples of Ramesses III at Karnak, 1930–1936" in chapter 5). In early 1932, Nelson again made the case for working at Luxor, writing to Breasted:

> It is unfortunate that this extremely interesting series of scenes, which are already so badly mutilated and are being still further destroyed by exposure to the air, have not been adequately copied. They are sufficiently large and detailed to form a volume of respectable size. I would like to suggest for your consideration that I apply to the Department of Antiquities for permission to copy and publish these reliefs. I should then plan next year to put one of our draughtsmen on this job, which would, undoubtedly, occupy him for the entire season. This of course is a bit of work outside of our present programme, but I believe it is justified under the circumstances. It would form a separate volume by itself and would, I am sure, be welcome to scholars. If you approve of this suggestion, please let me know and I shall apply at once to the Department for the necessary permission.[2]

In March 1932, Chicago secured permission to work at Luxor, but Breasted's approval was contingent on the project not delaying the work at Medinet Habu (much less on the Ramesses III temples at Karnak).[3] But only a few days later,

View of the Colonnade Hall, Luxor Temple, 1977. Photo: E. Krause.

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Figure 6.1. General view of Luxor Temple from the southwest, with the Colonnade Hall in the center and the First Pylon at left, 1974. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Nelson informed Breasted that he had decided against working at Luxor, because to "shoulder another enterprise" would create delays in their other projects; still, he reiterated his interest in the Luxor Opet scenes and said he hoped to turn to them after two or three more seasons.[4] In response, Breasted agreed with Nelson, but, ever eager to expand their work, he suggested, "Nevertheless, it would be exceedingly useful if you could put together in a single volume all that has survived in the way of reliefs depicting the Feast of Opet." The letter continued with a note that Alan Gardiner was very interested in the Luxor Opet scenes; in 1916–17, Gardiner had commissioned Howard Carter to make pencil sketches of them (fig. 6.2), but Carter did not complete the project. Breasted mused whether Gardiner considered himself still to have a valid "claim" on the material, continuing, "I mentioned the matter not because I regard Gardiner's claim as in the least degree valid, but because it will probably save complications if we do our own work on the Luxor feast without saying anything about it. That is, I do not mean we should conceal the fact that we are doing the work at all; but that we should go ahead and do it as a matter of course and not raise the question with Gardiner."[5]

Five years later, Nelson acted on Breasted's suggestion that they work at Luxor—but on different subject matter—when he applied for permission to copy the reliefs of the Festival of Min in Luxor Temple (as well as at Karnak and the Ramesseum) as comparanda for the scenes in the Second Court at Medinet Habu.[6] By early February 1938, Nelson reported that they had finished recording the scenes at Luxor,[7] and the question arose whether the Survey should do further work there. Nelson wrote to John Wilson about the possibility of approaching Edward Harkness, "the one who gave the buildings to Yale and try[ing] to secure funds for this show at Luxor."[8] Harkness was one of the sons of a founding partner of Standard Oil and a great benefactor to the Metropolitan Museum, where he served as the chair of that museum's Egyptian committee. Wilson reported the bad news that he had

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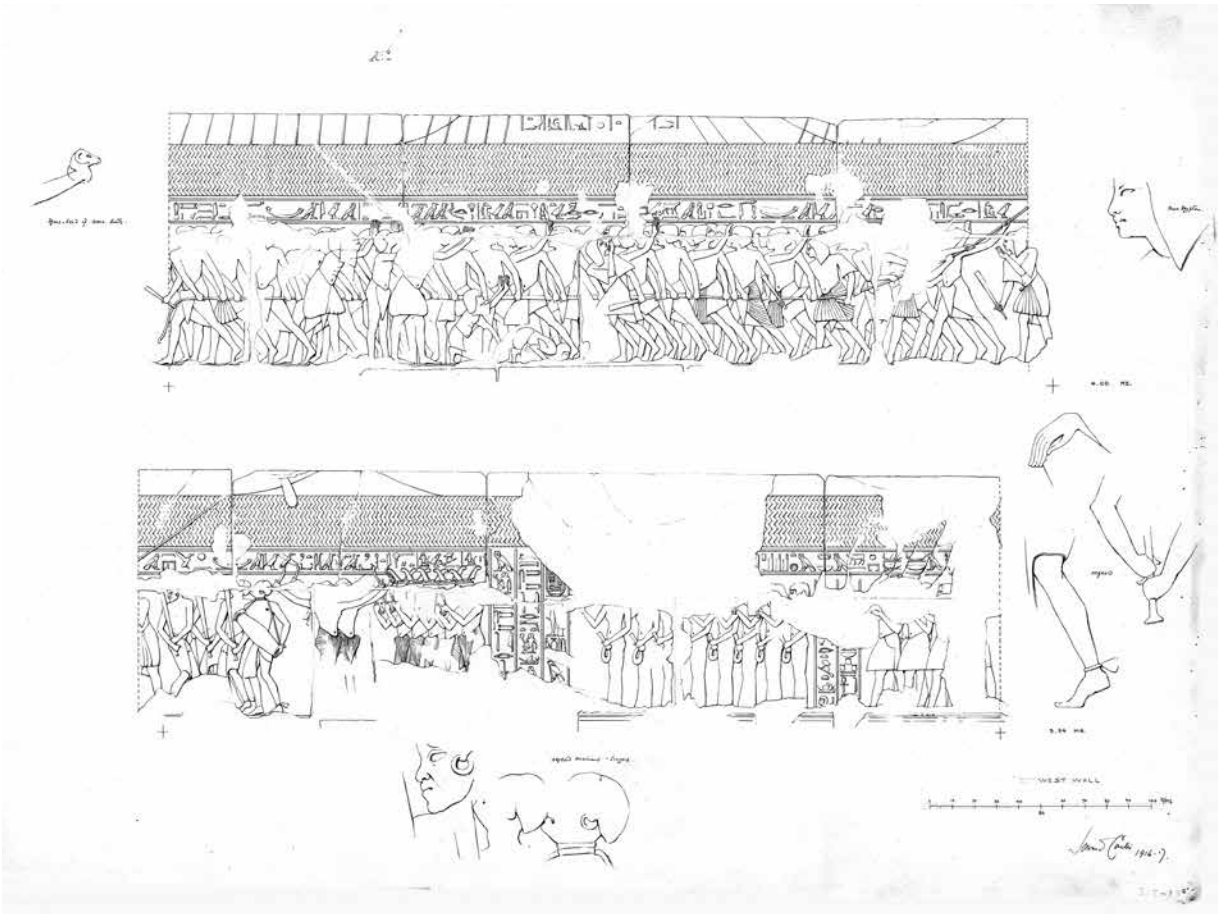

Figure 6.2. Drawing of the Opet reliefs by Howard Carter, commissioned by Alan Gardiner in 1916–17. Image © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

contacted Harkness two years before, and he "was not interested at this time."[9]

Almost four decades later, Kent Weeks was again drawn to working at Luxor Temple because of the historical importance and artistic value of the Opet reliefs and their inadequate publication by Walther Wolf in 1931. The temple also appealed to Weeks because documenting the Opet reliefs presented the opportunity to combine epigraphic and architectural studies; not only was the latter field familiar to him, but the reliefs in the Colonnade also were in very poor condition from the salt incrustation of their surface, "and if cleaning and recording are not undertaken promptly, there soon will be very little to record" (fig. 6.3).[10] He was also attracted to the project because he thought it "could be completed in a few years, not a few decades," and the Survey needed to show it could publish more rapidly to strengthen its grant applications. As Weeks recalled years later, "We seriously underestimated the size and importance of that undertaking!"[11]

In talks with epigrapher Bill Murnane about the scope of the project, they planned first to record the standing walls of the Colonnade Hall, then to document the "blocks from the walls scattered in the surrounding grounds with the hope of reconstructing (on paper) the wall's upper registers."[12]

The project to clean and document the Opet reliefs in the Colonnade Hall at Luxor (fig. 6.4) was approved in 1973, and work began in 1975 with the completion of the Sety I project at Karnak (see "The

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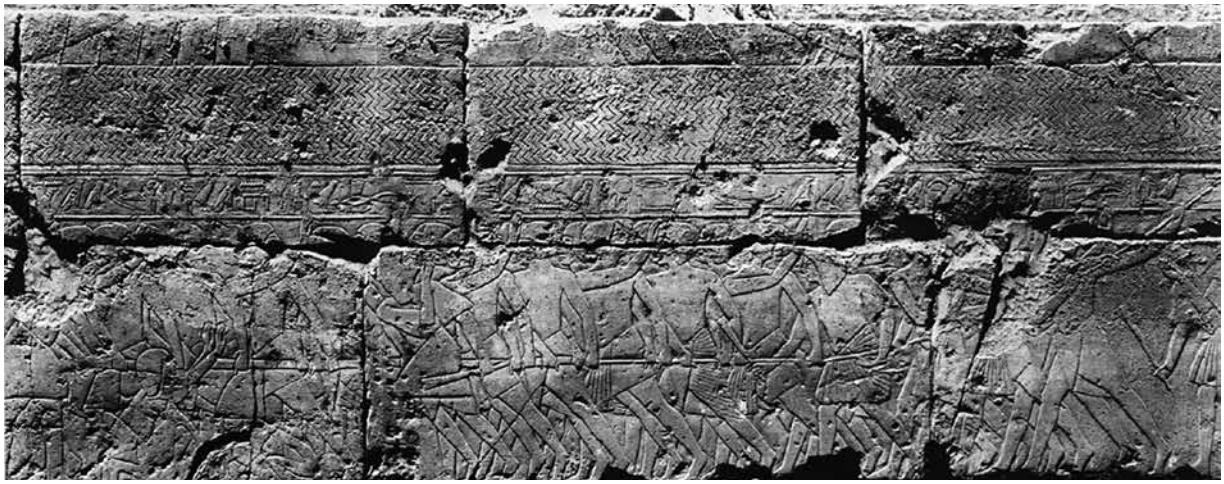

Figure 6.3. Opet relief showing men pulling the barge of Amun. The damage to the wall makes it difficult to see the relief and its details. Compare figs. 6.2 and 6.26. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Battle Reliefs of Sety I at Karnak, 1973–1976" in chapter 5). The detail and quality of carving of the Opet reliefs had persuaded Weeks that a large 1:3 scale would be best for illustrating their detail, although assessing what scale was best for producing the actual publication was not then taken into account. Murnane contacted the Griffith Institute at Oxford to obtain copies of Gardiner's photos and of Carter's drawings (fig. 6.2) of the reliefs in the Colonnade. Additional hand copies (of uncertain authorship) of the texts were also made available to Chicago.

Weeks's successor, Chuck Van Siclen, continued the work in the Colonnade Hall. In 1976, he was joined by his Chicago colleagues Murnane, Frank Yurco, and student epigrapher Mark Smith.

The next field director, Lanny Bell, continued the documentation at Luxor Temple. By the end of the 1977 season, the epigraphic work on the Opet reliefs was thought to have been completed. Artist Thad Rasche, who joined the Survey in 1978, was asked to take a final look at the epigraphic drawings, some of which had been done years before.[13] He discovered that some of the drawings had to be redone. This reassessment arose partly from the large scale of the drawings and partly from distortion in the photography from which the drawings had been

Figure 6.4. The Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple with Epigraphic Survey scaffolding in place to copy the inscriptions on the columns, 1979. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

done, because the camera had not been perfectly parallel to the wall. Both issues made it impossible for the drawings to be joined accurately into larger scenes. This flaw was not as fatal for the scene of the waterside Opet procession, the drawings of which needed only to be joined horizontally to create the representations of the long procession. Those drawings were left in the large 1:3 format, but the major offering scenes had to be redone. Artist Carol Meyer later suggested a smaller scale (1:6), which sped up the redrawing process.

In 1978, the team began documenting the columns of the Colonnade Hall (fig. 6.5) and the loose blocks scattered around the temple. In 1981, distortion was also detected in the drawings of the monumental columns, because their decoration had been traced on enormous sheets of plastic material that had expanded in the heat. As a result, Bell decided to publish that area of the temple as "close hand copies" rather than as true facsimile copies.[14] Examination of the facade of the Colonnade Hall that year revealed traces of previously unknown reliefs of King Aye recarved by Ramesses II, adding to the hall's complex history.[15]

The next season, in collaboration with the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, Survey members climbed scaffolding and ladders to the top of the Colonnade Hall, 21.2 meters above the ground, to study the architecture of the roof and take better photographs of the texts on the abaci and architraves (figs. 6.6 and 6.7). Of special significance for Bell, who was later to publish influential articles about the cult of the king at Luxor Temple, were inscriptions that stated that the temple was a "place

Figure 6.5. Artist Richard Turner tracing reliefs on the columns in the Colonnade Hall, 1979. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

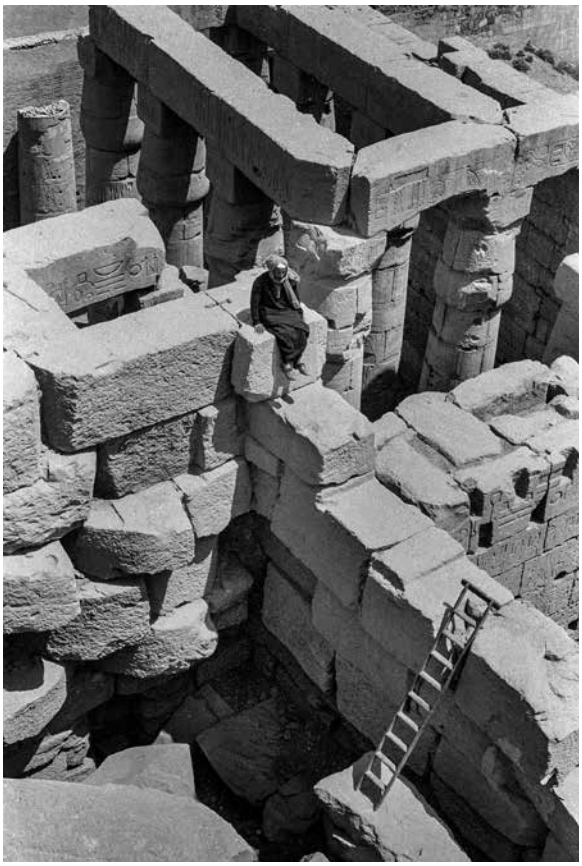

Figure 6.6. Working on top of the Colonnade Hall, 1979. Photo: L. Bell.

Figure 6.7. Richard Jasnow and photographer's assistant Gharib el-Wair atop the architraves of the Colonnade Hall, 1981. Photo: D. Olsen.

where the king [Amenhotep III] might become young again."[16]

In 1979, in cooperation with the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, the Survey began to examine the thousands of decorated blocks from monuments that had been dismantled and reused in post-pharaonic times, recovered by generations of archaeologists and then stacked in and around Luxor Temple. Most were recovered from the medieval-era tell in front of the temple when it was cleared away by the Egyptian government in the late 1950s to expose the Avenue of the Sphinxes beneath. Ray Johnson, who had special expertise in Egyptian art, led this part of the work. He examined each block when it was cataloged, and in the 1979 season, he identified more than 200 blocks as once having been part of the east interior wall of the Colonnade that showed the Opet procession, also finding that many of them actually joined. These blocks were documented and put aside with the goal of combining them into larger scenes. This material (and many of the other blocks) had been buried for centuries, so the details of the festival scenes on them were better preserved than those still on the wall, which had been exposed for centuries to sun and sand. Each season, more pieces of "the missing Colonnade" were recovered (144 in 1980 and 93 in 1981). Johnson, with his keen ability to differentiate relief styles, noted that blocks with other categories of themes and texts were from other areas of Luxor Temple and probably also from Karnak.

The hundreds of blocks created a whole new focus for the Survey. Of immediate concern was their conservation and protection, so the first step was to remove them from the damp ground to slow the efflorescence of salts on their surface. In 1981, four mastabas (platforms) were built to the east of the southern chambers of Luxor Temple. Each was constructed with damp courses that prevented groundwater from percolating up and reaching

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the stones. As the number of blocks increased, more emphasis was given to their conservation and documentation. In 1986 and 1987, conservator John Stewart was contracted to assess how they should be treated and stored. A three-year grant from American Express Egypt supported his work, supplies, and a bricklayer to build more mastabas. Stewart would continue to consult for the Survey concerning the Luxor blocks over the next two decades. More mastabas were built over the subsequent years, greatly facilitating the study of the blocks, which, after being added to a database, could be photographed and sorted by period or theme, eventually into twenty-four major groups. Ellie Smith and Crennan (Nan) Ray, longtime affiliates of the Survey, assisted the photographers who documented the blocks. By 1983, Johnson had enough blocks from the east wall of the Colonnade Hall to reconstruct virtually (on paper) a scene 9 meters in length (fig. 6.8). In time, additional scenes from the upper registers were joined, including a long strip from the second register that reached 22 meters in length.

The study of the blocks at Luxor Temple entered a new phase in the 1985 season when Johnson identified a group of sixty-seven reused sandstone *talatat*,* the secondary decoration in raised relief characteristic of Tutankhamun. Previously, it had been assumed that they came from the walls of the Colonnade Hall, but Johnson was unable to determine where they fit. He realized that they were from a completely different structure of Tutankhamun's, and that that king had reused blocks from an earlier structure built by Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton at Karnak. This discovery changed the understanding of the post-Amarna period, for it had been assumed that Horemheb, the last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, was responsible for dismantling the monuments of Akhenaton; in fact the process began earlier, under Tutankhamun. The Tutankhamun blocks, many of which showed then-unknown battle scenes, were the subject of Johnson's doctoral thesis.[17]

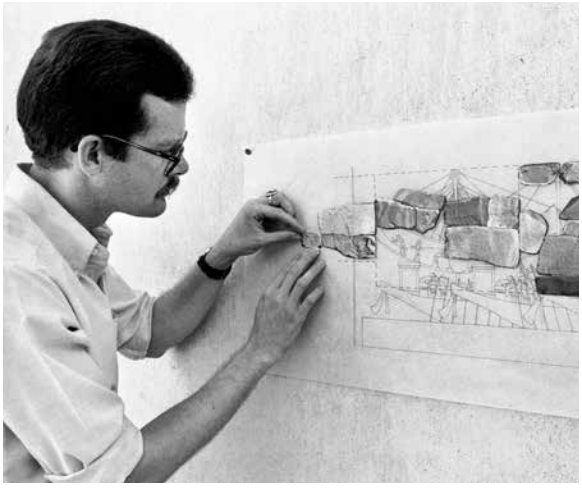

Figure 6.8. Ray Johnson with his reconstruction of the upper registers of the east side of the Colonnade Hall, 1983. Photo: S. Lezon.

In January 1985, Deborah Lawlor, president of the Foundation Bozawola in Australia, contacted Oriental Institute director Janet Johnson about drawings done by Lucie Lamy in the 1940s of much of Luxor Temple south of the Amenhotep III Sun Court. Lamy was the stepdaughter of the well-known mystic René Adolphe Schwaller de Lubicz and herself the author of *Egyptian Mysteries: New Light on Ancient Knowledge* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981). Murnane had seen blueprints of the drawings in the early 1980s, and he and Bell thought there was potential to work them up for publication as part of the documentation of Luxor Temple.† By the end of the year, Foundation Bozawola had offered $20,000 toward their eventual publication, funds that were badly needed for general operations. The drawings needed considerable checking and commentary, and corresponding photography had to be done. This offer came when the relationship between Murnane and Bell soured over the direction of the Survey and Murnane was

* Small-scale blocks (ca. 53 × 21 × 24 centimeters) used to build monuments of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaton.

† Some of the Lamy drawings were redrawn and published by H. Brunner in *Die südlichen Räume des Tempels von Luxor* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1977).

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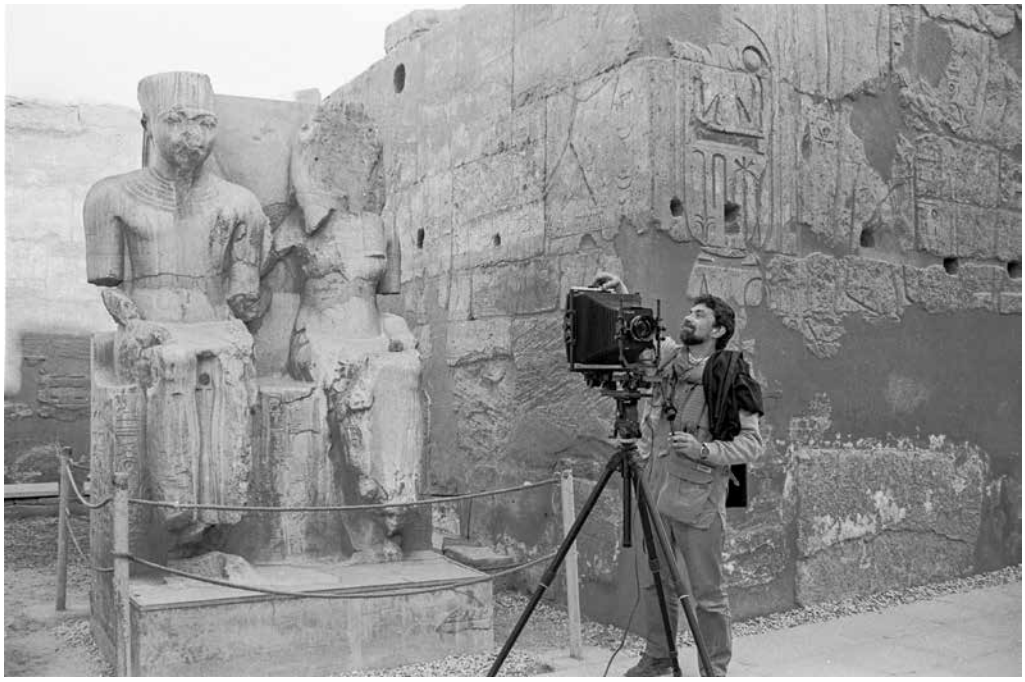

Figure 6.9. Photographer Yarko Kobylecky with the large-format camera in the Colonnade Hall, 1996. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

marginalized from the main projects in Luxor. Murnane approached Janet Johnson and suggested that he spend his last contract year working on the Lamy drawings, estimating that, even in their "simplified" state,* they could be ready for publication in a little over a year, if that were his only obligation.† But early in the following year, the project was abandoned when Bell told Johnson that if the project were to go ahead, it should stay with the Survey's Luxor staff.[18] The Survey did not pursue the Lamy drawings further and confined its work to the Colonnade Hall.

Luxor Temple under Peter Dorman

In 1989, Peter Dorman replaced Bell,‡ a change pressed by the faculty in Chicago in an effort to move the Luxor Colonnade Hall publication to completion. In his first year, Dorman focused entirely on the Luxor project, and the epigraphers whom Bell had assigned to Medinet Habu were transferred to the east. The pace picked up. Existing drawings were reviewed again; sixty-three additional ones were penciled and inked, and nineteen more were approved, including six in the 1:6 scale. In 1990, work focused on the new drawings of the west wall, and the epigraphers rechecked existing drawings. It was decided to recollate the drawings of the facade and the second-register scenes of the Colonnade Hall. Epigraphy for the Opet scenes was completed in 1992, and after sixteen years of work, the manuscript was submitted to the Oriental Institute publications office.

* He compared the style of the Lamy drawings to Harold Nelson's drawings of the Hypostyle Hall, which Murnane had edited and published in 1981 (OIP 106).

† Murnane commented that he could have the drawings ready for publication rapidly, in contrast to "the agonizingly slow pace of the Survey's production of its scientific work" (Murnane to Johnson, 16 February 1986, ISAC Museum Archives).

‡ Dorman had served as associate director to Bell in the previous season.

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Work continued on the side walls, facade, and upper-register scenes of the hall (fig. 6.9). These areas were more complex than the Opet scenes because they were in a combination of raised and sunk relief executed in the Ramesside, Third Intermediate Period, and Ptolemaic eras. Pigment and ancient graffiti (including the outline of feet and sandals with dedications by priests on blocks that once formed the roof of the Colonnade) also had to be documented. By 1995, those sections were also complete. That same year, the Survey was able to photograph the texts on the eastern architraves of the Amenhotep III Sun Court when the Supreme Council of Antiquities removed the scaffolds in that area (fig. 6.10).

The block fragments project continued to expand. Hundreds more blocks were recovered as the Egyptian Antiquities Organization emptied storage areas in the temple chapels and relocated blocks that had been stored along the exterior west side of the temple. The importance of the conservation project was underscored when a "freakish" heavy rainstorm inundated Luxor in March 1991. The blocks stored on the mastabas began to ooze black water, and some started to dissolve under the impact of the rain.[19] In 1995, a seven-year, $135,000 Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) grant from USAID, administered by the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), provided much-needed support. The funds allowed for the construction of more mastabas to raise the blocks from the damp ground where they could be documented and sorted. Stewart was engaged to create an overall plan for the project, and he continued to consult on the treatment of the blocks. In 1996, stone conservator Hiroko Kariya (fig. 6.11), of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, joined the Survey as conservator for the Luxor Temple block fragments project, a position she still holds. Conservator Ellen Pearlstein, also of the Brooklyn Museum, consulted on the project in 1996 and through the 1998 season. Kariya became Luxor Temple project conservator with Stewart's departure in 2003.

Work on the stone fragments took a dramatic turn in 1995 and 1996 when artist Ray Johnson,

Figure 6.10. Cecile Keefe atop tall scaffold erected to photograph the architraves of the Amenhotep III Sun Court, 1991. Photo: S. Lezon.

working with photographs of sculpture fragments taken by Hourig Sourouzian in the basement of the Egyptian Museum for her own research, identified missing elements of the western colossal indurated-limestone dyad in the Colonnade Hall. In 1996, the missing face of the goddess Mut was restored, with the fascinating discovery that the face had been reaffixed to the body in the early Roman period and repaired with a new nose, probably after having been damaged by falling roof blocks (figs. 6.12–6.14). The actual restoration of the face was charged with excitement. Carlotta Maher recalled that members of the staff "spontaneously appeared" at the site: "They had just come by some mysterious communication; they found out that this was the moment."[20] Johnson also identified two fragments—another face of Mut and a portion of her torso—that joined the smaller dyad of Amun and Mut on the east side of the Colonnade Hall,

Figure 6.11. Hiroko Kariya, Luxor block fragments project conservator, 2006. Photo: S. Lezon.

Figure 6.12. The Luxor dyad statue before the face of the goddess Mut was restored, 1995. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

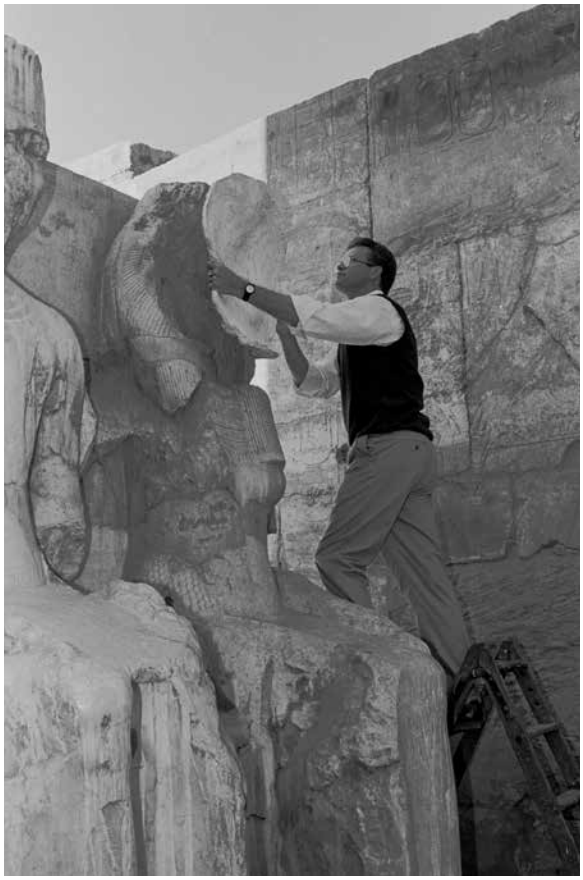

Figure 6.13. Ray Johnson testing a mold made from the back of the Cairo fragment of Mut's face to verify that it joined the Luxor statue, 1995. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 6.14. The Luxor dyad of Mut and Amun with the goddess's face restored, 1996. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

as well as the torso and head of another Mut goddess from a triad of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu at the Khonsu Temple. The upper part of the Mut figure of the smaller Luxor Temple dyad was discovered to be not the original Eighteenth Dynasty torso but an early Roman replacement carved in softer limestone, crafted after the statue was broken in the same roof collapse that damaged the larger dyad of Mut and Amun.

Luxor Temple under Ray Johnson

The Luxor Temple block fragments project grew in scope and complexity as environmental conditions continued to change in Luxor and the threat posed by salty groundwater increased. After the EAP grant ended in 2000, the Survey applied for and received a two-year grant from the World Monuments Fund with a matching grant from the Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust to build additional damp-coursed mastabas to safeguard and document the blocks. In the 2001 season alone, Johnson and Kariya supervised the construction of 310 meters of platforms and the move of more than 5,000 blocks off the damp ground (fig. 6.15). Much of this ancient material was originally from Luxor Temple, and the goal was to organize and reassemble large sections that could eventually be put back in their original location. Other groups of blocks had found their way south from Karnak, including major sections from the Ptolemaic gateways and pillars of the Mut Temple. In 2003, the World Monuments Fund/Robert W. Wilson Trust grant was renewed with a further $95,000, and the Survey inaugurated a new phase with the goal of creating an on-site museum of the blocks. The Luxor Temple open-air blockyard museum opened in March 2010 with displays of joined reliefs from different periods that visually demonstrated the long history of the temple area (figs. 6.15 and 6.16). Volunteer Andrea Dudek also redesigned the database for the Luxor blocks.[21]

Figure 6.15. The blockyard with mastabas built to store blocks gathered from the Luxor area, 2011. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 6.16. Blocks assembled into a group and displayed in the open-air museum, 2010. Photo: Y. Koblylecky.

Indeed, careful study of the blocks did enable some groups to be returned to the wall. Between 2005 and 2006, forty-eight fragments from the east wall of the Colonnade Hall showing the Opet festival river procession were installed in conjunction with structural work on the wall when it was reinforced by a new baked-brick buttress (fig. 6.17). In 2010, another group of more than 110 blocks was inserted into the restored interior east face of the Amenhotep III Sun Court (fig. 6.18), once again in a brick core that would allow the insertion of any new blocks and fragments found in the future. Reconstructing the block groups on their original walls restored their context and enhanced their meaning for the viewer.

In 2010, a grant from the family of Nassef Sawaris funded a separate block project for the conservation and documentation of blocks from the sixth century AD basilica of Saint Thecla—the earliest known church in Luxor. The blocks, recovered during the Ministry's clearance of the Avenue of the Sphinxes, had been stored in front of the east

Figure 6.17. Blocks restored to their original location in the upper register of the east wall of the Colonnade Hall, 2005. Photo: Y. Koblylecky.

Figure 6.18. Blocks restored to the east wall of the Sun Court of Amenhotep III in Luxor Temple, 2010. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

wing of Luxor Temple's First Pylon. This work was largely supervised by Survey architect Jay Heidel, who reassembled and digitally drew the blocks (fig. 6.19).

In 2012, the Survey resumed epigraphy in Luxor Temple, focusing on the Roman paintings in the Imperial Cult Chamber and the Amenhotep III reliefs in the King's Offering Chamber just south of the Roman vestibule (fig. 6.20; plan 3). Documenting the Roman frescoes was initially a project of ARCE, which funded their cleaning, photography, and publication (fig. 6.21).[22] Johnson decided that documenting the fragile and newly cleaned frescoes should be done while the cleaning was still fresh and before any future new roofing made access more difficult. That same year, as part of the Survey's experiments with digital epigraphy for reliefs, artist Krisztián Vértes initiated a project to make digital facsimiles of the Roman frescoes (figs. 6.22 and 6.23), while Heidel started digital documentation of the Amenhotep III reliefs in the King's Offering Chamber to the south. Also in 2012, experiments funded by the Women's Board

Figure 6.19. Left to right: Saied Hussein Abu Zeid, Mohammed Selim Khalafallah, Marwa Abdel-Naby, Saoud Kamal Khalafallah, and architect Jay Heidel reassembling the blocks of the sixth-century church of Saint Thecla at Luxor Temple, 2010. Photo: W. R. Johnson.

Figure 6.20. View of the Roman vestibule at Luxor Temple, 2005. The walls carved by Amenhotep III were, 1,300 years later in the Roman period, covered with plaster and painted decoration. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 6.21. The frescoes in the Roman vestibule, 2006. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 6.22. Krisztián Vértes with a digital record of the Roman frescoes in Luxor Temple, 2013. Photo: S. Lezon.

of the University of Chicago and Marjorie M. Fisher led Vértes to conduct a workshop on digital inking and collation using Wacom drawing tablets and Adobe Photoshop software, with the goal of speeding up the laborious manual process without sacrificing accuracy. The following year, Vértes issued a how-to manual on digital recording that was made available online.[23] After further experiments with digital techniques in 2015, the Survey was confident enough with the new approach that in 2017 Heidel began documenting the Amenhotep III reliefs in the King's Offering Chamber employing only digital techniques.

Digital recording was also applied to the Luxor fragments. In 2013, Heidel created a database of the blockyard material and produced the first totally digital drawings of a fragment group, blocks that preserve a version of the famous Bentresh Stela in the Louvre. Under his oversight, in 2015, photographers Hilary McDonald and Owen Murray started testing three-dimensional imaging software for their documentation of all 50,000 blocks and fragments in the blockyard. Using Agisoft PhotoScan (now called Metashape), they created drawing-enlargement-quality scaled images that are intended to enable the artists to make scaled drawings of fragments off-site, speeding up the process of documenting the blocks.[24] Work on the Luxor fragments was aided in 2015 by the addition of Gina Salama as blockyard assistant and data manager for the project.

Figure 6.23. Digital drawing of the Roman frescoes by Krisztián Vértes.

In addition, the Survey assessed the structural integrity of Luxor Temple, and from 2000 on, engineer Conor Power visited annually to monitor movement in the Colonnade Hall and the Ramesside pylons—especially the east wing of the First Pylon. Power created a baseline from archival photographs that he compared to the present condition of the temple. These annual measurements, which were submitted to the Supreme Council of Antiquities, became especially important in 2003 and afterward when USAID Egypt, in collaboration with SWECO,* initiated the Luxor groundwater-lowering project, with archaeological oversight by Ted Brock and ARCE. The dewatering project was extremely successful: between November 2007 and summer 2008, the water table fell by 10 feet—possibly enough to cause the temple structures to settle—yet no movement was detected. Subsequent testing indicated that the foundations had stabilized, and no movement has been detected since.

In the surrounding blockyards, conserving and monitoring the condition of the fragment corpus remains an indispensable part of the Survey's plan for preserving this material, supported by an active cataloging program, with approximately 20,000 of the estimated 50,000 fragments now recorded in the Luxor Temple fragment database. To date, more than 10,000 of these inscribed pieces have been recorded using high-resolution photogrammetric imagery, with more fragment documentation planned for future field seasons. Enhancements are also planned for the open-air museum, which forms a significant component of the Survey's site management program. Plans also call for gradually moving south toward the sanctuary, as well as documenting the Sun Court of Amenhotep III, continuing the documentation begun in 1995.

As of the 2023 season, the Epigraphic Survey was continuing its conservation, documentation, and publication initiatives at Luxor Temple. Facsimile recording of the Roman frescoes in the Imperial Cult Chamber was complete, and the photographs, drawings, and research notes were being prepared for publication by Krisztián Vértes.

Although much progress has been made at Luxor Temple over the past several decades, recording and publication of both the standing monuments within this complex and the vast collection of fragmentary material will continue to be a major commitment of the Epigraphic Survey for many years to come.

Publication of Luxor Temple

The publication of the Colonnade Hall was going to be an expensive undertaking. In 1992, Dorman approached the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust and secured a grant of $228,000 that funded the first two volumes of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple*. The grant provided sustainability by stipulating that any leftover funds from the grant, as well as any revenue from the sale of the volumes, be directed toward future Survey publications.

Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple—Volume 1: The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall appeared in 1994 as OIP 112. Truly a "coffee-table book," it could function as a piece of furniture, being the largest (and heaviest) volume ever produced by the Oriental Institute. The size arose from the subject matter: the 52.3-meter-long Opet reliefs, which were reproduced as a series of foldout sheets, with some plates made up of three dozen reduced drawings. Because the reliefs in the hall are very eroded, the Survey relied heavily on archival material to reconstruct their details, including the Gardiner photos and Carter drawings that Murnane had received from the Griffith Institute (see fig. 6.2). Another important archival source proved to be photos taken by Friedrich Koch in about 1912,† which served as the "fundamental

* The Swedish equivalent of USAID.

† Koch accompanied Breasted on his 1906 expedition to Lower Nubia, in the course of which Breasted developed his system of epigraphy. For a popular account of that expedition, see E. Teeter, "Breasted Recording Nubia: The University of Chicago Expedition of 1905–1907," *KMT: A Modern Journal*

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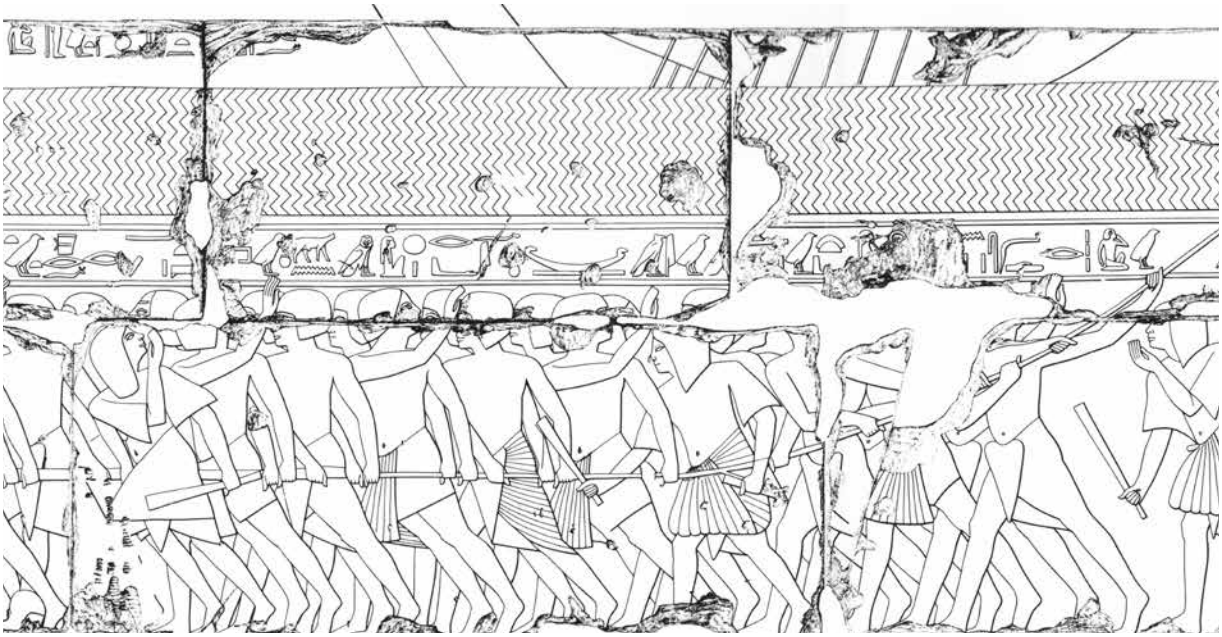

Figure 6.24. Scene of the procession of the barque of Amun as published by the Epigraphic Survey in *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple* 1, pl. 18. Compare figs. 6.2 and 6.3.

photographic record of the Opet reliefs" because of "their exquisite clarity, and their ideal natural lighting," and for "details that have long since eroded from the walls."[25] Details visible only in the Koch photos were added to the drawings in dashed lines.

Dorman later commented that the "quality of the epigraphy was never better than that for the Opet volume" (fig. 6.24).[26] As had become the custom, the plates and the accompanying booklet (which had a seven-page preface by Dorman) were boxed. The translations and commentary are credited to Richard Jasnow and John Darnell with contributions by Johnson, Deborah Darnell, and Dorman. Who authored the twelve-page glossary is not stated. The book was printed in Cincinnati by the Hennegan Press in 500 copies and retailed for $175.

Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple—Volume 2: The Facade, Portals, Upper Register Scenes, Columns, Marginalia, and Statuary in the Colonnade Hall (OIP 116) appeared in 1998. The booklet has a six-page preface by Dorman (then back in Chicago), translations of the texts and commentary, a glossary, and an index of the graffiti. The translations and commentary are credited "fundamentally" to John Darnell with contributions by Johnson, Deborah Darnell, Jasnow, and Dorman. The book was printed by the Chicago Press Corporation in 500 copies and retailed for $125.

A future volume in the series will deal with the Eighteenth Dynasty reliefs of Amenhotep III in the Imperial Cult Chamber; material for the upper registers of the Colonnade Hall also has been prepared for publication.

of Ancient Egypt 14, no. 4 (Winter 2003–4): 72–79. Breasted published his account of the expedition in the October 1906 and October 1908 issues of *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*.

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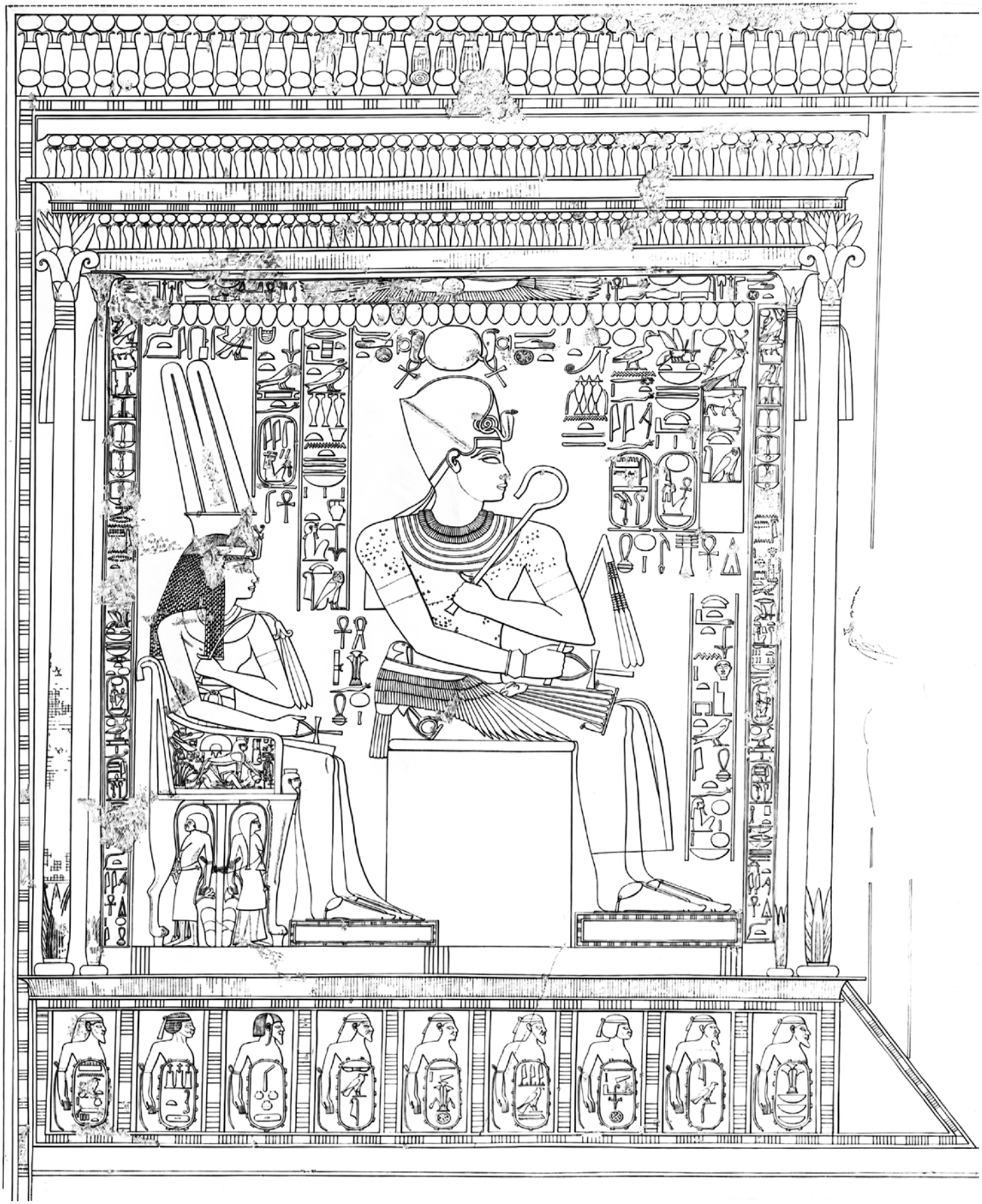

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7 The Tomb of Kheruef, 1954–1980

The publication of the tomb of Kheruef in western Thebes (fig. 7.1) (OIP 102, 1980) has a long and complicated backstory. In early 1950, Charles Nims of the Survey took photographs of the accessible parts of the tomb for Zakaria Ghoneim, then the chief inspector of Luxor, who intended to publish it.* When Ghoneim was transferred to Saqqara, his interest in the project waned. Labib Habachi (fig. 7.2) succeeded Ghoneim as inspector in Luxor, and he and Mustafa Amer, then the head of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, planned a joint publication of the tomb.[1]

When Margaret (Margie) Bell (later Cameron) (fig. 7.3), executive secretary for Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling, visited Luxor in March 1954, Habachi showed her the tomb, and she became a strong and influential advocate for its publication. Habachi apparently told her that the Egyptian Antiquities Service had an "impossible publication jam," and she "thought a service could be done by taking it out of the jam" with the help of the Oriental Institute.[2]

In June 1954, Kraeling and Nims met with Amer and Habachi about the advisability of doing a joint Chicago–Egyptian Antiquities Service project. The Egyptians enthusiastically proposed starting clearance of the tomb in the fall of that year, predicting it would be a four-year project with a total budget of $14,000, including £E1,000– £E2,000 to excavate the tomb over six months. The Egyptians envisioned a publication of "2 color plates, 36 plates of black and white + several plates of detail studies + 100 pages of text all in quarto (large)." Chicago was reticent, advising Habachi and Amer that it presently had no funds for the project, but, with Margie Bell's help, it might be able to raise some. Kraeling jokingly asked her whether she wanted a duplicate cast of the "luscious danseuses"

Queen Teye and King Amenhotep III at the king's jubilee, as depicted in the tomb of Kheruef. From *The Tomb of Kheruef*, pl. 49.

* In 1948, Ghoneim presented a cast of the princesses from the tomb to George Hughes. The cast was to be sent to the Oriental Institute Museum. However, it was so large and heavy, and shipping was at the time so difficult and expensive, that it stayed in Luxor and today hangs in the dining room of Chicago House (see fig. 12.28). See also M. Bell Cameron, *Letters from Egypt and Iraq 1954* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2001), 44–45.

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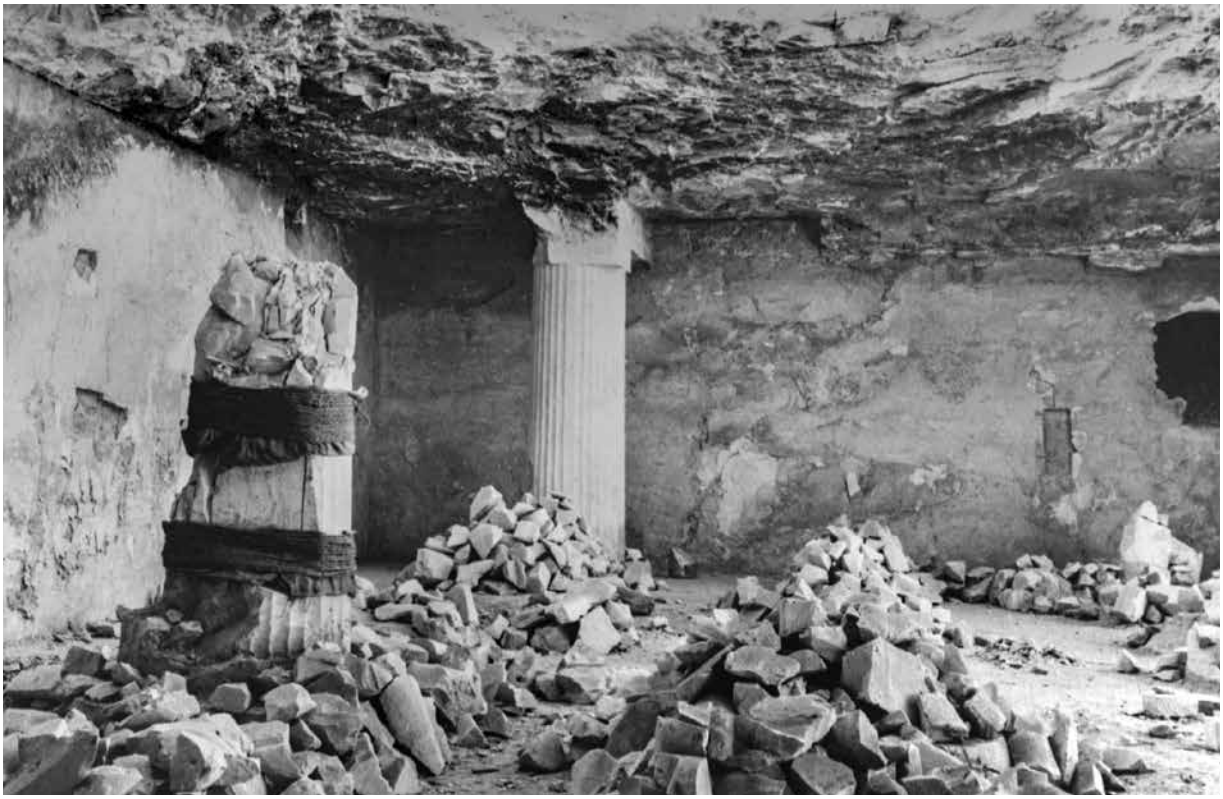

Figure 7.1. View of the tomb of the palace official Kheruef (ca. 1353 BC) in Thebes, 1968. Photo: C. Nims.

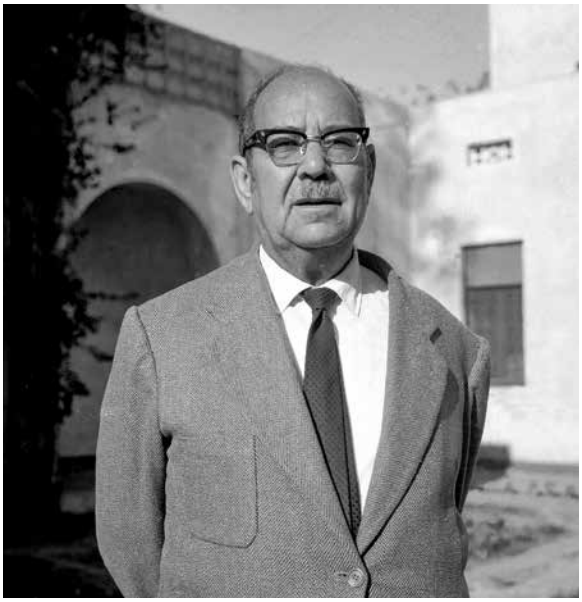

Figure 7.2. Egyptologist Labib Habachi, who started the excavation of the tomb of Kheruef and was a good friend, and later resident, of Chicago House, ca. 1960. Photo: Habachi Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

from the tomb to entice potential donors and to display at the Chicago Arts Club.[3]

In October 1954, Kraeling submitted a proposal to the Egyptian Antiquities Service to jointly produce a limited publication consisting of a plan of the tomb with sixty photographs and "several pages of carefully drawn hand copies" of reliefs and text "done by an Egyptologist and not a draughtsman" to avoid the time and expense of epigraphers and artists. The text would be limited to a "general introduction" on "its period, the merit of its plastic art . . . but all in a general way." Fuller coverage, Hughes suggested, could be supplied "at a later time by anyone as a job entirely divorced from this project."[4] The photos, for which $1,000 was budgeted, were to consist mainly of Harry Burton images commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum in the 1920s and 1930s. Habachi objected to the brevity of the proposed publication and countered that it needed to be longer in order to include the texts. He also suggested that

he could obtain two draftsmen from the Egyptian Antiquities Service to "do the difficult texts," but Hughes was doubtful about this plan, assuming that Cairo employees "would not move off their museum stools . . . to Upper Egyptian exile" unless paid a handsome supplement to their current wages that was not in the budget. Habachi also thought the $500 allocated for clearing the tomb was insufficient and needed to be doubled. Hughes and Kraeling further discussed whether the publication would be issued by the Egyptian Antiquities Service or the Oriental Institute, ultimately deciding on Chicago because of its capacity for better-quality printing. They also suggested that the publication would follow the format of *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak* III (the Bubastite Portal) with boxed plates, or a bound volume of the same dimensions as *Excavation* V.[5]

Bell continued to play an influential role in the project, as indicated by the notation "Margie as advisor on the artistic side ought to indicate what she would like to see shown in detail and contribute any other suggestions as to what would enhance the effectiveness of presentation."[6]

Chicago proposed a budget, exclusive of actual printing, of just $1,500–$2,000. Survey director George Hughes warned Kraeling several times about mission and budget creep, writing, "I had the uncomfortable feeling that the limited proposal might be accepted on the assumption that later enlargement with larger outlay would meet no great objections. Maybe they will state these reservations to you outright. . . . Ideas of precise limitations in this country are a bit fuzzy and always include an item called 'what can be managed.'" He further advised Kraeling, "There was a belief that certain things could not be done within the limits set down in your proposal," and commented that the Egyptians assumed "if necessity arose you would not object to slight enlargement here or there with extra outlay. I know estimating is difficult, but I thought they ought to tell you now if they deemed anything impossible within the limits."[7]

The project had problems beyond the contrasting expectations of Chicago and the Egyptian

Figure 7.3. Margaret (Margie) Bell Cameron, who was to play a pivotal role in the publication of the tomb of Kheruef, ca. 1962. Photo: Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Antiquities Service, including the fundamental question of who actually had the right to publish the tomb. As Amer wrote, "So many people had been mixed up in the tomb"—the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ahmed Fakhry (the chief inspector of Upper Egypt in 1943), and then Ghoneim in the 1950s. Amer offered to check with Fakhry to see whether he still intended to publish it, and Nims contacted William Hayes, curator of the Egyptian department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to get his approval of the project and permission to reproduce some of the Burton photographs.*

Another issue was a recently enacted regulation that "no new concession can be granted until the institution has returned any and all objects which

* Hughes to Kraeling, 19 October 1954, ISAC Museum Archives. The Burton photos were not included in the final publication.

they may have on loan from the Egyptian government."[8] The Oriental Institute had hundreds of Greek and Demotic ostraca excavated at Medinet Habu that were still in Chicago being translated by Alan Wikgren and Miriam Lichtheim,* and Habachi mentioned that "the matter came up in connection with any clearing of Kheruef's tomb." This matter was of great concern to both Hughes and Kraeling, for the ostraca "may have repercussions even in connection with our copying if something should go awry," and Hughes suggested that "it seems we should get our skirts clear as soon as possible and that unless direly necessary none of the ostraca should be kept."[9]

Even the acceptance of the proposal by the High Committee of the Egyptian Antiquities Service in January 1955 created problems for Chicago, for it stipulated that "the tomb of Kheruef should not be 'incompletely' published, that it be completely uncovered to reveal and make possible the inclusion of any reliefs which may not have been hitherto known about,"[10] which of course entailed a larger budget, although Habachi argued before the committee that less clearance than the proposal called for would be appropriate. Amer was embarrassed by the additional costs and sent the report to Hughes to convey to Kraeling, for as Hughes noted, "he wanted me to do the explaining to you."[11]

Kraeling began to have strong reservations about the project, writing that it had "gotten out of hand a bit," and more substantively, "Since I personally feel strongly that you and Charles [Nims] should not be diverted from the Medinet Habu operation, especially the preparation of the next volume, I find it hard to visualize our participation in the full dress operation of Kheruef. We would be accused of lowering our standards of operation of the Institute if we let ourselves be involved and then tried to get out from under with a minimum of effort,"[12] even expressing, "My own personal reaction to the Kheruef situation is that we might as well forget the whole matter. But perhaps I am being too pessimistic."[13]

But Kraeling apparently had a change of heart, for in August 1956, he (presumably in concert with Hughes and Nims) drew up a new plan for the project. It consisted of clearing the opening and passage of the tomb from the west portico "to make sure that this does not contain bas-reliefs belonging to the set presented in the portico," a plan, a "number of drawn diagrams that would show the parts of a given wall or opening covered by several photographs," and not more than eighteen "supplementary photographs" of the reliefs. The resulting publication would be issued jointly but printed and produced in Chicago with a total budget of $4,000, twice the amount projected two years earlier.

Nims still thought the plan too abbreviated: "While the chief aim of this publication would be to show the art of the tomb, it would be a shame if the publication were inadequate as far as the epigraphy goes. There are ceiling inscriptions which cannot be easily photographed, and in some places the inscriptions are not adequately shown on the photographs. I should suggest that several pages of carefully drawn hand copies be given where the epigraphers believe these inscriptions are not adequately shown on the photographic reproductions. Since these would be reproduced by zinc plates, the cost would not be great." Hughes also suggested that they include sixty plates of photos and that they be new photography by Nims supplemented by eighteen from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Alan Gardiner.[14]

In the March 27, 1957, *Archeological Newsletter*, Kraeling made an appeal for funds, exhorting, "If we could enlist your interest and have your help, we could really do something important here, not only in making a magnificent tomb accessible to visitors but also showing how tomb clearance should really be done, namely by removing permanently and not to the next adjacent spot the chipped stone masses

* Alan P. Wikgren, a Greek papyrologist; see T. G. Wilfong, "Allen P. Wikgren," *BASP* 35 (1998): 123–24. Miriam Lichtheim was an Egyptologist who specialized in Demotic and did her graduate studies at the Oriental Institute; see M. Lichtheim, *Telling It Briefly: A Memoir of My Life* (Fribourg: University Press, 1999), 29–34.

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Figure 7.4. The coffin set of Shepet-en-Khonsu (Twenty-Second Dynasty, ca. 890 BC) from a chamber off the tomb of Kheruef. Habachi stands second from the left, with Hughes kneeling in front of him, 1958. Photo: C. Nims.

that now surround the site." This insistence that the debris be moved away from the necropolis—which was a good policy—was to slow progress.

Administrative troubles with the ministry persisted. When Hughes went to the Egyptian Antiquities Service in November 1957 to receive the final paperwork, he found that "no one seemed to know what I was talking about."[15] He finally received the permit but noted that they were lucky it was granted at all, because it conflicted with a new regulation that prohibited new excavation anywhere other than in Egyptian Nubia, a move intended to direct fieldwork south for the Nubian Salvage Project. Hughes commented, "Our case turned out to be a kind of maverick, and they [the Antiquities Department] were stuck with a previous commitment, which they were a little hesitant about honoring."[16] As early as October 1954, the question of whether an excavation permit would even be issued came up, and Habachi suggested they frame the request not as an excavation "but only scratching to determine a plan."

Once permission, "maverick" or not, was received, clearance of the tomb began on December 12, 1957, under Habachi's direction with Hughes as codirector. They started with twenty pick-and-basket men, and by the end of the season in mid-April 1958, they had eighty workers and two trucks from the Department to carry the debris that lay in high heaps around the tomb to the edge of the cultivation, where they could be sure it would not bury another tomb.[17] By March 1958, they forecast that the clearance would take another year.

In January 1958, Habachi and his team discovered a "maze of later tombs" on the east side of the first court of Kheruef that contained seven Third Intermediate Period anthropoid coffins (fig. 7.4).* Because they were granted an excavation permit that was actually contrary to the existing

* Published by Habachi as "Clearance of the Tomb of Kheruef at Thebes (1957–1958)," *ASAE* 55 (1958): 325–50. Some of the coffins from Kheruef were widely dispersed and today are in Havana (1523A–B), Zagreb (E678), Dublin (1881.2228), and Luxor (106).

regulations, it was impossible for Chicago to issue a press release about the find—publicity that surely would have helped raise funds for the publication.[18] And although Hughes suggested, "I suppose it would not hurt to start a battle to get a mummy case or two," he was aware that the permission to excavate explicitly stated that "we would not ask for or receive any objects discovered."[19]

The second and final season of excavation (1958) did not go so smoothly. Habachi was embroiled in conflicts with the Egyptian Antiquities Service[20] and was ultimately replaced by M. Abdul-Kader Muhammad, although he made special provisions to ensure that Chicago was well informed about the progress of the excavation in his absence, and he himself hoped to return to Luxor once or twice a month.[21] By November, as the tomb became more accessible, James Knudstad, an architect who worked on the Oriental Institute project at Jarmo, Iraq, and later in Nubia, drew plans and sections of the tomb that Hughes commended to Kraeling: "I think I can say that no Theban tomb, probably no Egyptian tomb anywhere, has been so carefully, accurately and beautifully laid out as Jim has done this one."[22]

But in December 1958, the excavation came to a standstill as the chief inspector and the (unnamed) *conservateur de la nécropole* feuded with each other. To make matters worse, the two trucks vanished, leading Kraeling to worry that they were going to have to move their dump twice—a cost they had not anticipated.[23] The excavation was completed in 1959.

Photography and epigraphy began in early 1961, the work delayed by the Survey's commitment to copy the temple of Ramesses II at Beit el-Wali in Nubia. Once free of the Nubian project, Hughes still faced the challenge of spreading his staff over two projects. Indeed, he optimistically predicted they could be done with Kheruef "next season . . . the gods being propitious and seeing to it that they do not dump any more Nubia on us."[24] But indeed, the gods did give them more Nubia when Hughes had to substitute for Seele as field director for the excavations at Serra from 1961 into 1962, further delaying the start of the work at Kheruef (see more in chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963"). Yet optimism persisted. In 1964, Nims predicted that the project would be completed that year, and then again in 1965 and 1966. The work finally came to an end in 1970.

The Kheruef team consisted initially of Nims, Hughes, Egyptologist/epigrapher Ed Wente, and artists Reg Coleman and Leslie Greener (fig. 7.5). Coleman and Greener were joined by new artists Grace Huxtable and John Romer in 1966, and Greener left after the 1966 season. Documentation of their activities season by season is sketchy, but in 1965, they were working on the hundreds of fragments from the walls, trying to establish their original location in the tomb. The following season, Nims reported that most of the scenes and texts were fully recorded, with just a few areas and more fragments yet to be done.[25]

Funding continued to be a problem. In October 1956, Kraeling met William R. Boyd, a retiree from Florida, when Boyd contacted Chicago for help planning a trip through the Near East. Kraeling described him as "being foot-loose and having some money to invest in keeping interested in life, he wants first to take a look-see and then to contribute something to archaeology." Kraeling suggested that Hughes introduce him to Kheruef and pitch it as a project that might be supported over several years. Boyd spent ten days in Luxor in November 1957, and he and Hughes hit it off, the latter writing that Boyd "made himself so completely a member of the family that we did not want to see him leave."[26] Habachi invited him to crawl through the debris in the corridor of Kheruef, then under excavation, to see the exquisite reliefs. A month later, Hughes wrote to Kraeling of their success in cultivating Boyd: "I must honestly admit that neither Charlie [*sic*] nor I can remember what we may have said to give him the idea [of financial support]. Certainly, we were not consciously proposing the idea, so don't make

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Figure 7.5. Leslie Greener and Charles Nims working in the tomb of Kheruef, ca. 1964. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

us out here heroes just yet." The problem was that Boyd was not specifically interested in Kheruef.[27] Indeed, he was hooked on supporting archaeological work—but he was more interested in Seele's work in Nubia (see chapter 8, "The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963"). By January 1958, the Oriental Institute had contributed $5,000 toward the clearance of the tomb and was mulling another $5,000[28]—considerably more than the $1,500–$2,000 it had considered in 1954.[29]

Boyd returned to Luxor in January 1959 on his way to Khartoum with Hughes and Seele as they scouted sites for work during the Nubian Salvage Project. During his visit, he again saw the tomb and was also able to see objects from it in a storeroom.[30] Kraeling continued to hope that they could persuade Boyd to fund Kheruef, and in March 1960, he asked Seele (then the director of the work in Nubia) to contact Boyd with an appeal for "general money raising," apparently hoping it would stimulate him to make a contribution.[31] In March 1962, Hughes reported that Boyd "has $5,000 and wants advice about what to do with it."[32] He suggested that the funds go toward the publication of the Beit el-Wali and/or Kheruef volumes, which were, he put it diplomatically, "not financially provided for." In November 1963, Hughes had a more productive exchange, with Boyd saying "he would like to assist in publishing Khereuf's tomb."[33] But in February 1971, Boyd informed Nims that he was unable to pay for the publication, leaving Hughes (then director of the Oriental Institute) to "raid the membership fund or scrounge the funds from anywhere."[34]

The publication, *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192* (OIP 102), appeared in 1980 as a joint publication of the Epigraphic Survey and the Department of Antiquities of Egypt. Its appearance a decade after the work was completed was attributed to a "long delay in the preparation of parts of the text."[35] The tomb ultimately received the full Chicago treatment, with eighty-eight plates, each measuring 48 × 38 centimeters,* comprising twenty-nine sheets of photographs, fifty-two plates of drawings, two reinforced photos, three plans, and three figures—an enormous increase from the original concept. It was accompanied by an eighty-page booklet with commentary on the tomb and its owner by Nims and Habachi, respectively; a preface and introduction to the plates by Nims; translations of the texts by Wente; and an index of Kheruef's titles and epithets by David Larkin†—all valuable features that had not originally been anticipated. The publication was dedicated to the memory of William Edgerton, who had died in 1970, and Keith Seele, who had died in 1971, "whose standards of epigraphy have guided the work of this expedition."

* The same size as *Excavation* II–V.

† *Kheruef* was to be Larkin's only publication in conjunction with his work on the Survey.

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8 The Epigraphic Survey and Nubia, 1954–1963

The Nubian project came to the attention of the Epigraphic Survey in December 1954 when field director George Hughes learned that Mustafa Amer, the director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, had proposed a "big Nubian scheme to get all the archaeologists in the field up there."[1] The Centre d'Étude et de Documentation sur l'ancienne Égypte (CEDAE),* founded in May 1955 and under Amer's direction, spearheaded the early work in Nubia.† CEDAE was funded in part by UNESCO with the aim of creating a central depot for photographs and data about Egyptian monuments that would be freely shared with colleagues throughout the world.

George Hughes discussed the scope of the project and the possible involvement of the Oriental Institute with its director Carl Kraeling, reporting that in late 1954, a delegation consisting of Selim Hassan, Ahmed Fakhry, Labib Habachi, "and some architects" spent two weeks in Nubia to assess the size of the job and make recommendations for work. They concluded, "The job will be one of recording by photo primarily with clearing and hand copying where necessary. Salim [*sic*] Hassan would run the show overall. The territory would be divided and separate groups put on separate areas."[2]

UNESCO, represented by director-general Luther Evans,‡ was initially undecided about the scope of the work. According to Hughes, "Evans said there is a possibility of having photographing and copying done wholesale of all

Ramesses II presenting Maat to Amun (originally Atum) in the vestibule at Beit el-Wali. Published in *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II*, pl. 1. Photo: C. Nims.

* CEDAE's original goal was to document Theban tombs, but its focus shifted to Nubia when the building of the Aswan Dam was announced and the threat it posed to Nubian monuments was realized.

† Amer stepped down from the directorship of the Antiquities Service to become the first director of CEDAE in 1956.

‡ Luther Evans (1902–81) was an American political scientist who worked in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. He was appointed head of the Library of Congress in 1945 and became director-general of UNESCO in 1952. See L. Olson, *Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction* (New York: Random House, 2023), 146–47.

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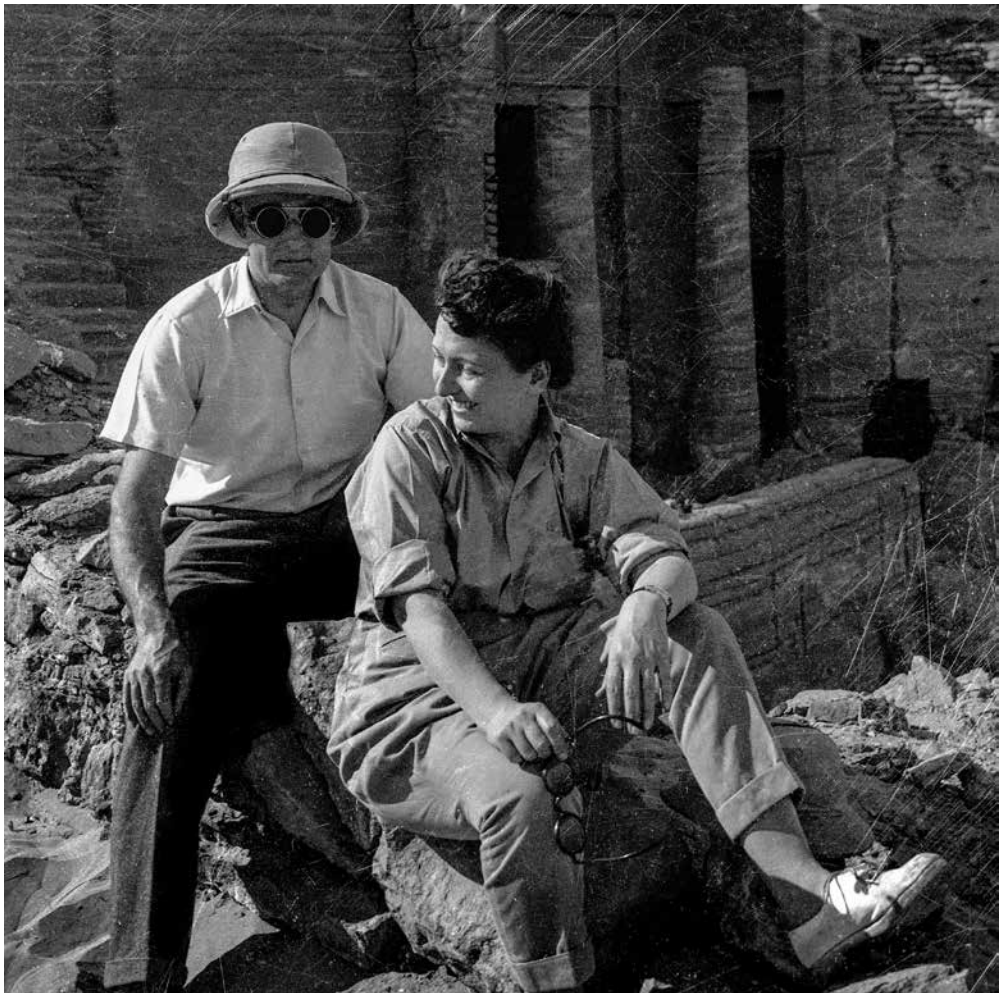

Figure 8.1. Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt of the Louvre, a leader in the Nubian Salvage Project, with her husband, André, ca. 1955. Photo: L. Habachi, Habachi Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

antiquities, but there isn't money for that. There is the possibility of collecting other people's records, published and unpublished, where they would be altogether, but stopping there."[3]

Another major issue was who was to do the work. The Egyptian government was solidly anti-British, having expelled the Brits only two years prior, while the Antiquities Ministry was anti-French. The French had not been allowed to excavate in Egypt since the late 1940s, and the Suez Crisis in 1956 further poisoned relations. In addition, only in 1953 was an Egyptian finally appointed director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service (namely, Mustafa Amer)—a post the French had held for ninety-five years.* As Hughes summarized, "That leaves Germans and Americans, especially Germans." But contrary to the feeling in Egypt, Luther Evans and UNESCO relied on Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt of the Louvre for direction (fig. 8.1). Evans, Amer, and Desroches-Noblecourt made their own reconnaissance trip to Nubia in

* The anti-British and anti-French attitude in the Egyptian government motivated foreign parties to move their excavations to Nubia, including Walter Emery to Buhen in 1956 and Clément Robichon to Soleb in 1957. See also *Archeological Newsletter*, 7 December 1975, 273; J. Thompson, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2018), vol. 3, 246, 296 (British), 263–64 (French).

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late 1954. Hughes clearly did not trust Desroches-Noblecourt and seemed to resent her influence:

> Previous to this I heard only rather amused or disgusted remarks that Evans had sent Desroches-Noblecourt of the Louvre out on a handsome stipend to set up an office and help UNESCO decide how and what to do. The lady is competent as a person within limits. We like her knowing full well that she is a viper and that she pretty indiscriminately attacks from the rear. . . . Nobody seems to be clear as to what Mme. Noblecourt is accomplishing or is supposed to accomplish. . . . She buttered me *sotto voce* to the effect that "these people" (Egyptians) are incompetent and do not understand, but that I would and that she must come later to enlist my advice and help. (Why do people think I'm always on their side? Don't answer that. I know it's because I am a colorless, ineffectual guy who musters up a reasonably intelligent expression and only listens.)[4]

Desroches-Noblecourt wrote to Kraeling, "soliciting" the help of the Luxor staff and specifically requesting the "loan" of Charles Nims. In January 1955, Kraeling replied:

> UNESCO must understand that Dr. Nims is in Egypt as an Egyptologist and epigrapher who is able to add value for us and for our Epigraphic Survey by his experience and talent as a photographer, but neither he nor we can afford to have him spend his time acting as a technician. This means that he will not be available for the kind of work that Mme Noblecourt suggested for an indefinite amount of time or for an indefinite series of years. All arrangements must be for as brief a period as possible, and at the present time for the current season only.

He also stipulated that UNESCO contribute to Nims's travel costs. Although Noblecourt's letter is not in the Chicago archive, the tone of Kraeling's letter gives the impression that he thought she did not express enough appreciation of Nims's valuable experience as an Egyptologist and epigrapher.[5]

Letters between Hughes and Kraeling discussed what level of participation the Oriental Institute could afford beyond "loaning" Nims. Kraeling was concerned about the impact of committing Luxor staff, considering that he and Hughes had resolved to finish recording Medinet Habu by 1961 (later rescheduled for 1962). He wrote, "We don't want a big job, in fact, we may not want any, but a nice small productive thing would be worth thinking about. I would not want to have anything interfere with the regular work at Medinet Habu, but if something could be done e.g., by John [Wilson], I might try to see if we could make it possible. . . . I don't think we ought to let ourselves in for anything that might take Charles [Nims] away from you or you away from Luxor." Another consideration was the impact of the salvage project on the Luxor facilities: "I think we ought to watch lest any upriver expeditions by other agencies should want to use our premises as a jumping-off or dumping ground. We might want to serve them, but we ought to attach a price-tag to service operations if they involve responsibilities on our part."[6]

By late 1955, the project had become a reality, and Nims was released from his Luxor duties for a six-week leave to "direct the photographic section of the start of a recording expedition" at Abu Simbel (fig. 8.2). Nims recalled that his services were requested not "because I have any special knowledge of photography, but because at Chicago House the generations of staff members have developed a reputation for accuracy in the whole process of recording. . . . It is a great compliment to the work of the Epigraphic Survey at Luxor that its methods are the ones on which the recordings of Abu Simbel are modeled."[7]

The expedition got off to a rocky start, with weeks of delays followed by a sudden summons on December 23 for the Nimses to leave. Although they had planned to spend Christmas at Chicago House, they packed and departed. To their disappointment, they got to Aswan and then "sat on a blinking houseboat at Assuan until at least the 26th." In Hughes's opinion, "Beyond all doubt that

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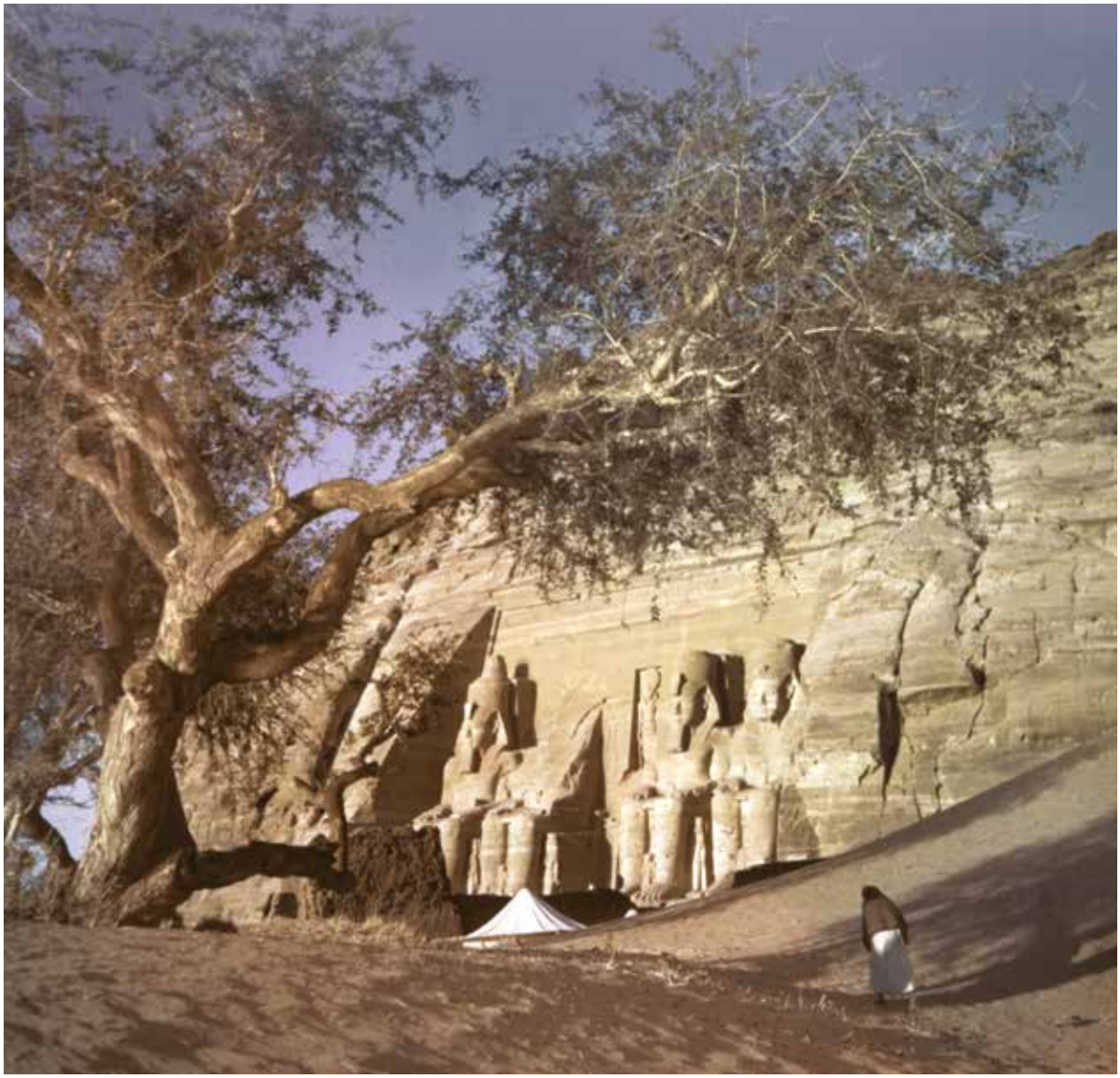

Figure 8.2. The Great Temple at Abu Simbel, with a tent erected as an office for the scientific staff, ca. 1956. Photo: C. Nims.

expedition is the most disorganized mess that ever took off for anywhere. Equipment is available only haphazardly even yet and they probably won't get much done during the five weeks Charley is to be on the job."[8]

At Abu Simbel they lived on the *Sheik el-Belad*, a barge moored at the temple, and Myrtle Nims took over the housekeeping. As Nims recounted, "It was by special dispensation, and with some raised eyebrows, that she was allowed to come. I think our colleagues now feel that she is a creditable addition to the group."[9]

Nims was assigned to photograph the reliefs and pillars in the first hall of the Great Temple and the walls of its side rooms, the latter of which took a hundred negatives. The work was coordinated so that the Kadesh reliefs were cleaned before they were photographed. To ensure complete coverage,

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Figure 8.3. Friedrich Koch photographing stelae at Abu Simbel from the masthead of the expedition's dahabeah, February 1906. Photo: V. Persons, ISAC Museum Archives.

each photo had a "half overlap" with the adjacent area. The work was challenging. Nims's darkroom was in a small building constructed to the south of the temple. The darkroom had no running water, and there were no facilities to make prints, so he had to judge his work from the negatives alone. He hoped that it might prove possible to produce the enlargements at Chicago House.

The interest in archival documents of Nubia reminded Habachi of the more than a thousand photographs of Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia taken by Breasted during his 1905–7 expedition (figs. 8.3 and 8.4). Around the same time, William Boyd* offered to fund the publication of a monument by means of "a set of our own photos of some reasonable sized unit without the complications, problems, and delays involved in any drawings or additional material." Although the Breasted collection was discussed as being especially timely and valuable, the project did not move forward.†

* A good friend and financial supporter of the Oriental Institute, especially the work of Keith Seele. See further in chapter 7, "The Tomb of Kheruef, 1954–1980."

† Other options considered for a Boyd-funded publication included the Ptolemaic temple at Deir el-Medina, which Nims

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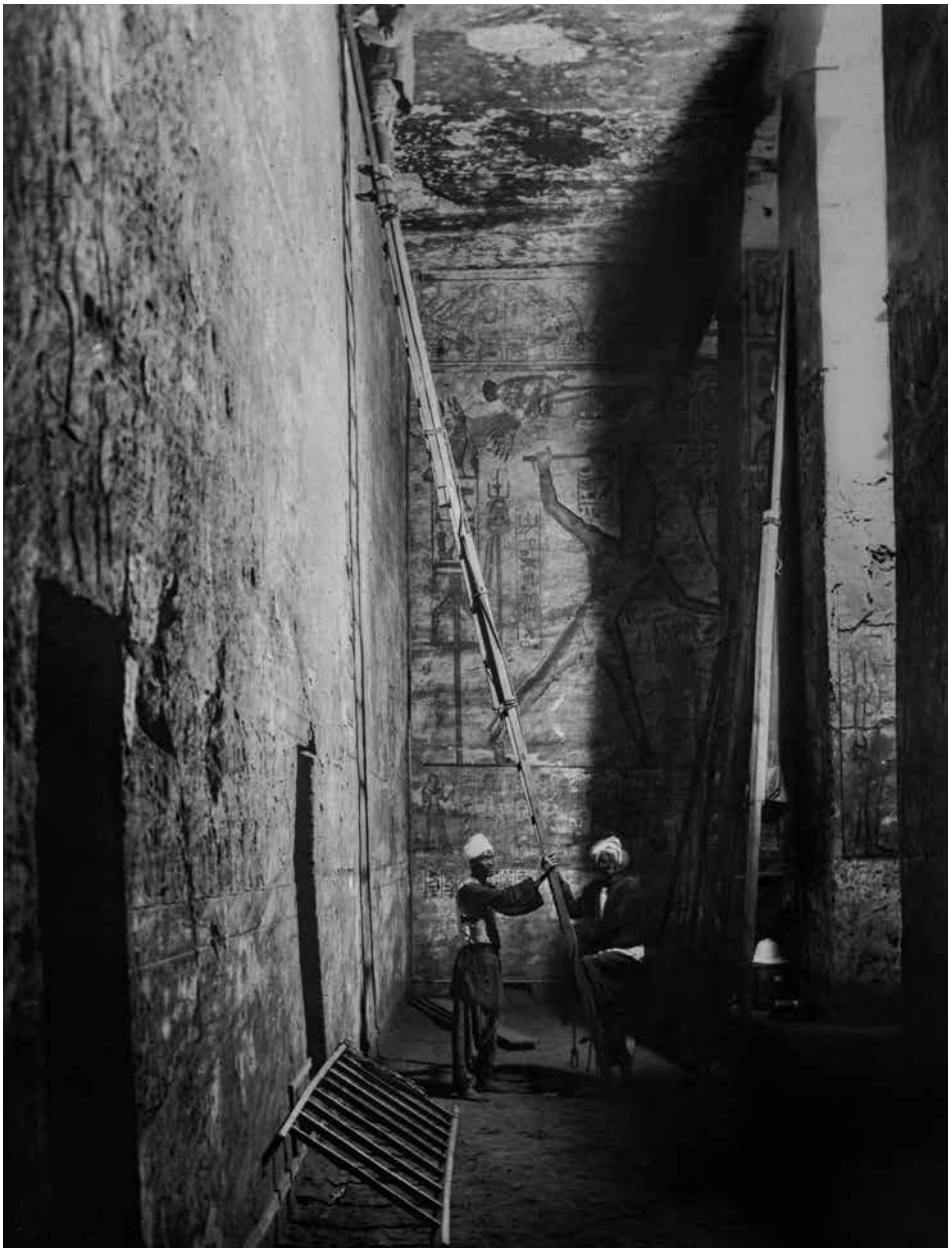

Figure 8.4. Victor Persons or James Breasted (at top of ladder) copying inscriptions in the Great Hall of the temple at Abu Simbel, February 1906. Photo: F. Koch, ISAC Museum Archives.

had already almost completely photographed, but it was rejected because "it is in the former French Institute bailiwick and although they have not worked there for some time, as usual, we are sure that any approach to them would elicit the reply that one or another of the youngsters is going to publish it." Other ideas included the tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57) and the Ptah temple at Karnak (Hughes to Kraeling, 1 January 1958, ISAC Museum Archives).

The official launch of UNESCO's Nubian Salvage Project in 1960 brought pressure on Chicago House to expand its work in Nubia. According to Hughes, Evans "took an interest in us and saw what [we] were doing, and I think he saw that we were doing the job everyone knows should be done and as they know it should be done." In

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February 1960, Kraeling wrote to Hughes, "A lot of people are coming to me and saying that the Institute should do something, and maybe they are right."[10] Hughes responded:

> Charley, Ed [Wente] and I have kicked the matter around for a long time to see what we could recommend as a possible venture beginning with the potentials of the Luxor expedition, perhaps modestly augmented by people like Jim Knudstad and others . . . we thought of doing photography, surveying, the minimum necessary drafting and epigraphy on some edifice or edifices. Some of the edifices would have to be done in summer. This sort of job we figure as usual nobody is going to do when there is excavation loot on the horizon, but the documentation center wants people on that job. I should think the government would have to divvy up some desirable objects returned for that kind of work too, but so far I haven't seen that stated.*

In March 1960, the voting members of the Oriental Institute approved a new expedition to Nubia, to be overseen by a committee consisting of Keith Seele (fig. 8.5), John Wilson, archaeologist Carl Haines, Oriental Institute Museum director Pinhas Delougaz, and Oriental Institute director Thorkild Jacobsen, with Seele being appointed director of the Aswan High Dam Project. The institute had no budget for the work, and it was acknowledged that working in Nubia was expensive because of the logistics of moving personnel, supplies, and equipment to remote areas with no housing or infrastructure. Complicating things further, two separate accounts had to be maintained: one for the UNESCO appeal for the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia (of whose American branch Wilson was one of the chairs), and the other for funding the Oriental Institute work.

Seele estimated that the first season of excavation would cost "close to $200,000," but he optimistically forecast that "the Oriental Institute believes that its many friends will help to pay it as we start off to do our share in saving the monuments of Nubia."[11] Through Uvo Hölscher, the Oriental Institute entered into a partnership with the Swiss Institute that brought the badly needed expertise of architect/Egyptologist Herbert Ricke, and also "a substantial financial contribution to defray the expenses of the campaign."[12] The project thereby became a joint Oriental Institute–Swiss Institute project.[13] Other funds came from William Boyd, who funded the first two reconnaissance trips and who was invited to go on both—experiences that were sure to strenghten his continuing interest in the Oriental Institute's work in Nubia. Many of the start-up costs were covered by an initial "underwriting" of $50,000, which may have come directly from the University of Chicago.[14] Wilson and Hughes explored other private sources, including the Cincinnati Art Museum, from which they hoped to receive $40,000 to $50,000. That idea did not work out, but they had better luck with the Wilkie Brothers Foundation of Des Plaines, Illinois, which pledged $10,000 per year for at least three years.† Later excavation costs were covered by a $200,000

* Hughes to Kraeling, 29 February 1960, ISAC Museum Archives. In 1958, Hughes attended a UNESCO conference in Paris on his way to Luxor. He later reported to Kraeling, "It is true that the government offers a 50/50 division of all finds with anyone who will excavate in Nubia. Also you can have almost any temple in Nubia, including, I should probably say especially, Abu Simbel right on the Midway if you will [do] it at your own expense. All excavating and other operations be at the participants' expense too" (Hughes to Kraeling, 18 October 1959, ISAC Museum Archives). Whether purely epigraphic missions would also be awarded finds was an open question, however.

† The Wilkie Brothers Foundation was established by Leighton Wilkie, a tool manufacturer and inventor of the metal-cutting bandsaw, who cofounded the DoAll Group. For many years, the Oriental Institute Museum granted the Wilkie Foundation long-term loans of ancient Egyptian tools and reliefs for its educational outreach programs, probably in thanks for its financial support of the Nubian project. Leighton Wilkie wrote and self-published a book, *Civilization through Tools*, in 1981 and curated an exhibition of the same

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Figure 8.5. Keith Seele at the Oriental Institute with Nubian pottery and a copper-alloy mirror from Qustul, August 1963. The large Meroitic jar in the foreground was presented to Lady Bird Johnson, who in turn donated it to the Smithsonian Institution. Photo: Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

PL 480 grant that Oriental Institute director Robert McCormick Adams applied for through the US National Commission for UNESCO.[15]

Work in Nubia

As Wilson wrote, "Our work in Nubia has three parts: exploration of a stretch of twelve miles on each side of the Nile River, excavation of the most promising indications from that exploration, and copying the temple of Beit el-Wali."[16] The first two elements, the excavations, were (as Hughes had been reassured) supposed to involve the Epigraphic Survey only peripherally. Staffing appeared to be ad hoc. Seele was not an obvious or even likely choice as director for the work in Nubia—he was an Egyptologist, not an archaeologist, and had no experience in Nubia. This shortcoming was solved, at least for the first season, with the addition of Ricke from the Swiss Institute.[17] Yet Hughes worried about his Luxor staff being seconded to Nubia: "What we are wondering is where does this expedition go from here. What do I tell our boys about next season? What is the budget for our boys who

name at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. See Wilson to Seele, 20 December 1960, ISAC Museum Archives.

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are hot in pursuit of the end of Medinet Habu? I don't know whether any or all of them would want to sign a contract if they were going into a totally other job. I have no idea because I have said nothing."[18] Wilson expressed his own doubts: "Our reaction so far is one of breathlessness and a slightly skeptical, not to say, dim view of the proceedings which we hope will be dispelled as we know more. Perhaps we know too much of the hard realities involved in such a project."[19]

Hughes and his colleagues made several reconnaissance trips to see what sort of work would be compatible with Chicago's interests and resources. In mid-April 1960, Seele, Hughes, Boyd, Nick Millet from Toronto, Zaki Saad, and William Kelly Simpson (who was traveling on behalf of Yale and the University of Pennsylvania), supported by a cook and two "pick and shovel men" from Chicago House, spent ten days on a steamer scouting sites on both sides of the river. Saad was an inspired—and convenient—addition, because he was director of inspectorates and excavations for the Egyptian Antiquities Service and had the authority to give the group permission to visit the sites and do "test digs whenever desirable."[20] Seele wrote evocatively about the partially drowned landscapes, with half-submerged rows of sphinxes, the "topmost stones of a great temple already submerged," and doomed villages.[21] The group combed the riverbanks, collecting pottery to establish the area's habitation history. At Bab Kalabsha, they saw the great Kalabsha Temple, already submerged during part of the year, and the small rock-cut temple of Ramesses II called Beit el-Wali. Seele wrote, "Thus I came to the decision that our Oriental Institute Egyptian Assuan High Dam Program should send an expedition to Beit el-Wali."[22] This new direction was a change for the team, for earlier Hughes and Seele had settled on the temple of Ramesses II at Gerf Hussein. As Hughes wrote, "Gerf Hussein had been my choice of a temple . . . to record in Nubia because it has never been recorded in any form. That was before I had ever seen it; then in April 1960, Dr. Seele and I saw it. I ceased abruptly to advocate for it, for it was one of the dirtiest, more incomprehensible messes of carved wall in existence."*

In December 1960, Nims, Hughes, and three artists (Reg Coleman, Leslie Greener, and John F. Foster) left Luxor for Beit el-Wali (fig. 8.6) to begin photography and to study the temple.[23] Only a week after their arrival, they were able to report that they had "completed the penciling work on more than three-fourths of the scenes on the walls of the open court of the temple," and they planned to move on to finish penciling the drawings of the reliefs in the inner section. After that, they returned to Luxor to ink the drawings, and then they expected to "collate and complete the major portion of the entire temple."[24]

The logistics for the Nubia team were complicated by the fact that there were no good roads in Egyptian Nubia, there were no communications, and the team needed to be supplied from Aswan. Millet helped Chicago secure the rental of the *Memnon*, a former Cook's Tours steamer that was elaborate enough that Hughes sarcastically referred to it as "the royal Seele barge" (fig. 8.7).[25] Boyd contributed funds for a "superb motor launch, built for the US Navy in 1942," that Seele bought in Alexandria and, with the help of a boatman from Abukir, brought to Luxor. Seele christened the launch the *Barbara* (fig. 8.8), after Barbara Switalski (later Lesko), whom he described as "a student of Egyptology at the Oriental Institute, who has been one of the first to stir up interest in saving

* *Archeological Newsletter,* 23 December 1961. He later reconsidered, writing in the same issue, "Since then it was carefully cleaned by the Center of Documentation in Cairo. Reports were that the results were remarkable and the reports were not exaggerated. It is clean, decipherable and shows considerable expanses of painted detail still preserved. Ramses II's atrociously bad reliefs—probably the worst of his 67-year reign—are now almost bearable."

Figure 8.6. The Beit el-Wali temple of Ramesses II, ca. 1961. Photo: C. Nims.

Figure 8.7. The *Memnon*, the (relatively) luxurious floating headquarters of the Chicago Nubian Expedition, 1960. Photo: J. Knudstad, ISAC Museum Archives.

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Figure 8.8. The *Barbara*, a motorboat donated to the Nubian Expedition by William Boyd that was moored in Luxor for years after the end of the project, 1960. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

the Nubian monuments, even before the Institute was formally committed to the project." It is hard to imagine such a tribute to a female graduate student not raising eyebrows today. The *Mona*, a small aluminum boat with an outboard motor, completed the flotilla. Hughes recalled a visit to the French at Wadi Sebua:

> I for one felt as near like the ugly American as I ever have. Here we came steaming into their port with a spacious houseboat, a twin-motored power launch behind it, and behind that a small, sleek aluminum craft with outboard motor. They had been unable to get their one modest motor launch above the dam. . . . They had hitchhiked with their equipment on the deck of a tug-boat, were living and working for weeks in native houses, with no means of communication or supply. . . . We must have looked to them, as they stood on the shore bidding us goodbye, like the Pacific fleet on a courtesy cruise.[26]

The second season of epigraphy at Beit el-Wali lasted for three weeks, ending on November 30, 1961, well before the temple was scheduled to be cut from the rock and relocated to New Kalabsha in 1962.

In contrast to the smooth progress of the epigraphic mission, the first season of excavation, scheduled for mid-December 1961 at Serra East, did not proceed as anticipated. Seele had a medical emergency in Chicago and was not able to go into the field, and Hughes had to step in to make the arrangements, complaining that "this scratchy kitten" was thrown into his lap.[27] He flew to Cairo in late November and, aided by Louis Žabkar, James Knudstad, and Habachi, worked frantically to obtain labor and supplies, the latter of which they stockpiled at the Garden City House hotel. Hughes was forthright about his lack of respect for Seele's capacity for organization. He replaced Seele's two cooks, in whom he saw "inefficiency and piracy," with one cook, Hassan, from Chicago House, and

sent an "SOS" to Nims to join them because Seele had failed to include a photographer on the team. He also drafted Mrs. Nims (the couple rarely traveled separately) to take care of the housekeeping, referring to her as "a pillar of strength amid my visions of chaos in the kitchen" and further commenting, "We also expect that she will be able to shake down the household—or is it a shiphold?—and turn it over in running order to Mrs. Williams* when the Williamses arrive from Toronto about the first of the year." What had seemed like very complicated plumbing and electrical problems onboard the *Memnon* were quickly solved by Tim Healey, and Hughes straightened out the complicated banking procedures and obtained exit visas for the Egyptian workmen. Hughes did not relish the work, writing that "I am painfully aware that I am perhaps sabotaging well laid plans for the work of the Luxor expedition by taking Nims and myself away" and "this business of having two expeditions at once is complicated enough without their being over 300 miles apart and on opposite sides of an international boundary at that."[28] Hughes and the Epigraphic Survey were forced into a role that they had neither anticipated nor wanted.

Hughes not only organized the expedition but, in Seele's absence, also became the interim field director. As he wrote, "If anybody had told me six weeks ago that I would ever be associated with an excavating outfit, not to say pinch-hitting at heading it, it would have either amused me as the impossible often does or given me nightmares." He modestly added, "But I'm only supposedly directing it; these people know what to do and get it done. The only useless person in the group is myself, and they can go on without me in a couple of weeks, I'm sure."[29] Hughes was able to go back and forth from Serra to Luxor several times to continue the work at Medinet Habu.

While at Serra, Hughes wrote *Archeological Newsletters* for general consumption that painted a rosy image of the expedition's experience.† But in personal letters he was far more negative, reporting that he and Nims were disillusioned with Serra, which he described as a "sad specimen of a site we have to look at every day. . . . It's a pitiful jumble of junk that robbers and archaeologists have dug and tumbled around until there isn't a prayer of finding one thing worth carrying away. And we could have had any site in the Sudan, even the ones nearby that are right now yielding good and even remarkable finds." He also expressed his resentment at Seele's request for detailed reports on the expedition's activities: "But pray tell me what's all the brush-fire about anyway? Why should Louis [Žabkar] and I write our every move to Seele? I wonder. We have been pretty darned busy making up an expedition in a month that he didn't even make basic plans for between March and November. Pardon my French, but he hasn't a damnedest little bit to say in criticism or approval of what we had to do by way of rescue [?] or are doing now. As for me, I report only to the Director of the Institute."[30]

Hughes and Seele had never been close, having disagreed about the organization of the Medinet Habu volumes and their content, but the Nubian Expedition brought their differences into the open. Kraeling, anticipating trouble, tried to minimize friction by suggesting that Seele establish an office in Cairo or Aswan rather than having a presence in Luxor.[31] Even before starting work in Nubia, Hughes was concerned about Seele "raiding" his Luxor staff. And in mid-March 1960, he was blunt in a letter to Kraeling: "What is uppermost in my mind, is this: Is this expedition, if not for the next season then thereafter, at the disposal of Seele and his committee. Do I not just stop planning anything as of now and tell the boys I can no longer tell them what may be expected of them or us? It looks as though we haven't had and will not have much say about the project but will be liable for corvée as determined from Chicago."[32] That same

* Vivian Williams, wife of Ronald Williams of the University of Toronto.

† Available online at https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/archeological-newsletters.

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day, Wilson handwrote a brief note, probably to Kraeling, advising, "Hughes should have reassurance that raiding the Epigraphic Expedition must be subject to the consent of the Field Director, and that it makes no sense to transfer the whole epigraphic staff to the Nubian survey. The situation is grave, but not serious."[33]

Hughes expressed his doubts about Seele's ability to deal with the complexities of excavating in Nubia, for he had no experience in either: "One thing only we are sure of is that the revolting developments and snafus are going to land right on this old beat up desk in the front office."[34]

Another issue with Seele was his poor relationship with Habachi (see fig. 7.2 in chapter 7), whom Hughes valued as a trusted colleague and go-between with the Egyptian Antiquities Service, and who had been instrumental in obtaining permission to work at the tomb of Kheruef. Habachi had been on the Egyptian commission that assessed the Nubian project in 1955, and in an *Archeological Newsletter* Nims mentioned that Habachi was expected to be the "chief of the project" in Nubia—years before Seele was considered for the position.[35] When Seele was appointed director of the Nubian project in 1960, Habachi was given the title "consulting Egyptologist." In the 1961 season, when Hughes had to substitute for Seele, Habachi was part of the team that managed to "pull the expedition together," and it was assumed Habachi would return to the field in subsequent seasons for "continuity." This official association with Chicago was critical to Habachi, for in 1960 he resigned from the Egyptian Antiquities Service, assuming he would be in demand as a consultant for foreign missions working in Nubia.[36] But his separation led to his being blacklisted, and most missions did not want to risk problems with the authorities by hiring him.

Predictably, Seele and Habachi clashed over the amount of control that Seele demanded, down to mandating that his staff wear a coat and tie for dinner while in the field. Habachi complained that rather than being a consultant, he was treated as a "messenger boy."[37] Things came to a head when Žabkar left the expedition and Habachi requested that he be given Žabkar's title of "assistant" to Seele, provided a raise, excused from "many administrative duties," and allowed to "fast without being criticized." In response, Seele wrote a long and strongly worded letter saying that Habachi's requests were "entirely unacceptable," and "if you feel it impossible to enjoy your duties on our expedition then the time has certainly arrived when you ought to make a change in order to take another position [in] which your work can be more congenial. . . . I feel that it is in your best interest to release you from a position which has become distasteful to you."[38] Seele ended the letter with a demand to "submit to me all manuscripts prepared while serving on the expedition and made possible by opportunities to serve the expedition or to use its equipment and facilities, and to turn over to me for the Oriental Institute any photographs, color slides etc. which have been made from film supplied by the expedition." Habachi sent copies of Seele's letters to Oriental Institute director Adams with the plaintive comment that Seele "deprived me of the pleasure of working with the OI."[39] The rupture between Seele and Habachi was of concern in Chicago, and Adams wrote to Hughes and Nims to get their opinion whether any political fallout in Cairo was possible and whether they felt there should be a longer-term collaboration between Habachi and Chicago in archaeological projects in the Nile Valley.[40]

Hughes's predictions about Seele encountering difficulties—beyond Habachi—proved true. Even Wilson joined in, professing to be "deeply upset" about Seele's "performance abroad." He wrote to Hughes:

> On return I reported to the Acting Director, whom [*sic*] immediately swung into action. That action is still not final, but it does look as though the immediate direction of our Nubian expedition might be in some capable field hands next year. . . . In the Bible, when Belshazzar saw the writing on the wall, I expect he put up a real protest before submitting. Our friend is not submitting easily, but he has had

> plenty of opportunity to see the handwriting is on the wall. The problem about the Nubia expedition, both this year and next is not whether there will be a change in command but how and when.[41]

That same month, Wilson tried to get Seele to resign, but "he balked like a steer" and responded by accusing Wilson of "maliciousness and jealousy."[42]

Seele apparently felt that any criticism of his work was unjustified and motivated entirely by envy from many sources—including the halls of the Oriental Institute. In an April 1963 report to Oriental Institute director Adams that gives the impression of a persecution complex, he wrote, "Most criticism stems from jealousy, and jealousy is inseparable from success. Now the success of the expedition has been beyond the most optimistic expectations or dreams. There will be the inevitable small minds looking for little things to criticize or complain about. Some of them have probably already started. A few of them may be in Cairo or elsewhere in Egypt; unfortunately, others are a stone's throw from your office. I know who most of them are." And he suggested that we "thumb our noses at the envious carping critics who could do the entire job so much better than we are doing it, but who are sitting on the side lines while we are sitting in the Nubian sun."[43] This defense did not endear Seele to his colleagues. Wilson and Hughes hoped that Haines of the Oriental Institute's Iraq expedition would replace Seele. But Seele survived the attacks, and in 1963 and 1964 he led work at Ballana, Qustul, Adindan, and Kasr el Wizz, although the local inspector sent "long telegrams saying the Field Director is acting irrationally."[44] After 1964, the Oriental Institute's Nubian excavations were led primarily by Knudstad.[45] Seele returned to Chicago, where he served in the publications office and continued to spar with Hughes.

Hughes himself received criticism for the epigraphic work—whether fair or not. In April 1962, Wilson received a letter from the Documentation Center in Cairo "making a ruckus over the Beit el-Wali documentation." Hughes replied that he had heard from a visitor who had been in Paris "that there was tremendous talk about our awful failure at Beit el-Wali." Hughes responded with a full-on blast against Desroches-Noblecourt, who he believed was behind the criticism:

> Lady Kiki [Desroches-Noblecourt's nickname] has resented our presumption in offering to record that temple from the beginning, last spring gave me evidence of it and has been looking for an opportunity to make trouble. I am sure that is the source of it. I am inclined to tell them to please go ahead and do their job of documentation on it because the slipshod job they do and the type of stuff they want simply means our doing it over again that way for them after having done it the way it should be done. They have lots of people and have wasted so many thousands without properly recording one single monument that a little more won't matter—and we dare them to publish their travesty when ours is published.[46]

But more substantively, Hughes expressed frustration about the impact of the work in Nubia on the core mission at Luxor, writing to Ethel Schenk, administrative secretary at the Oriental Institute:

> I think we ought to be able to polish off Kheruef next season, the gods being propitious and seeing to it that they do not dump any more Nubia on us—and, believe me, nobody, but nobody, is ever going to do that again to me. I am so doggone lost in bookkeeping and so frustrated dealing with two governments. In Luxor I can't even light long enough to get some honest work done and in the Sudan I am only a stuffed shirt doing a little interpreting of Arabic, giving orders without knowing whether they are right or wrong and seeing that there is enough money on hand to pay a mass of workers. Things go on well both places only because of these good, efficient people: Maurine, Tim and Ed in Luxor and Jim, Louis and Ron [Williams] at

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> Serra. Don't let anybody in on this but if I got lost between Luxor and Serra both places would go on without a ripple.[47]

The Nubian Expedition created headaches for Nims and the Survey long after the excavations were completed. In 1964, he became the expedition's director, and now that he was its head rather than Seele, he was left with the unenviable responsibility of accounting for the project's equipment and durable supplies, some of which had been paid for with government grant funds and legally had to be returned to the government or, upon its instructions, transferred to another grantee. Other equipment that had been purchased with dollars belonged to the University of Chicago, and there was sometimes difficulty in determining into which category assets fell.

Of special concern were the four vessels used by the Nubian Expedition: the tugboat *Elda*, the motor launch *Barbara*, the houseboat *Fostat*, and the small launch *Mona*. The 36-foot, wood-hulled *Barbara*, purchased with funds from Boyd in 1960, belonged to the University of Chicago. As a result, it was of special concern to Nims because it could be repurposed for the use of the Survey. The other boats were acquired with PL 480 funds, so they needed to be returned to the government or transferred to other approved projects. A major priority was relocating the boats below the Aswan Dam before it closed in March 1964 to avoid being trapped on Lake Nasser. Another problem was the amount of Chicago-owned property, especially then-scarce gas cylinders, a gas-powered refrigerator, and batteries that were on board the *Fostat*. Nims was concerned that if the ships' ownership was transferred with the equipment on board, it would be lost to Chicago. In October 1964, Nims and Healey went to Aswan, removed all the equipment and perishables purchased with dollars, and brought them back to Luxor.

In January 1965, George Scanlon, an Oriental Institute research associate who was excavating the early Islamic site of Fostat in Cairo for ARCE, arranged to use the appropriately named *Fostat*, and a tug moved the ship downriver. Nims wrote that Scanlon "plans on leaving the *Elda* and *Mona* here. I had hoped I was rid of them."[48] Again the responsibility fell on Nims, who had to hire an extra guard for the boats. Meanwhile, Healey took the *Barbara* to Armant for maintenance before Boyd, her donor, visited Luxor. With the *Mona* and *Elda* parked in front of the house, Nims commented, "we look like a ship-yard."[49] The *Mona* was small enough to pull out of the water for dry storage, but the *Elda* continued to haunt Nims. It was still in Luxor in 1967, and in such bad shape as to be in danger of sinking. The Oriental Institute was fed up with being the custodian of boats from which it legally could not divest itself. In exasperation, Ethel Schenk advised Nims, "Let the *Elda* sink!"[50] But Nims kept it afloat, concerned that Chicago House would be cited for "obstruction of navigation," and that there was still salvageable equipment on board.[51] Nims was further frustrated that the Nubian account had insufficient funds to maintain the boat.

Finally, in early 1967, the US State Department gave Nims permission to transfer the ship to ARCE, but that March, he wrote to John Dorman of ARCE reminding him that Scanlon had agreed to take the *Fostat*, *Elda*, and *Mona*, but he had left the *Elda* and *Mona* in Luxor. He complained that Healey was looking after the *Elda* and keeping it afloat. In January 1968, a whole new problem arose when the State Department expressed uncertainty about whether Nims needed permission from Khartoum or Cairo for the transfer. The licensing of the *Elda* posed other problems. Dorman of ARCE encouraged Nims to sell it cheaply on behalf of the US government. It was also suggested that Nims remove the engine and scrap the ship. But with the title in Seele's name, Nims could do nothing, and the Oriental Institute was obliged to pay

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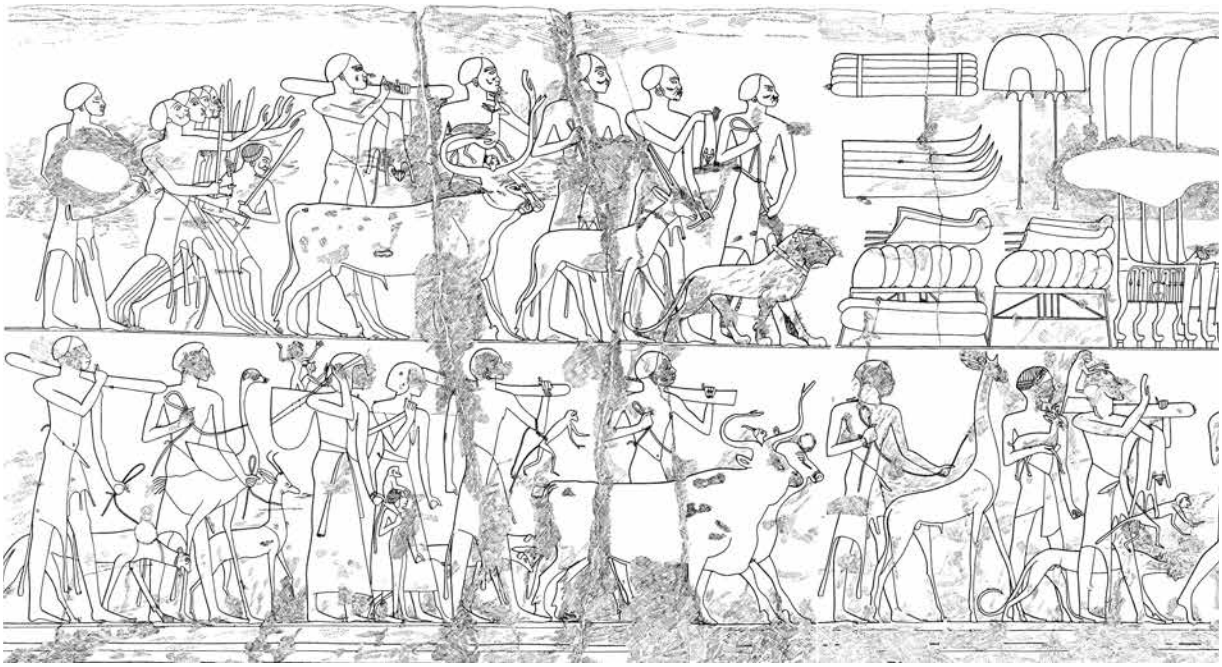

Figure 8.9. Drawing of Nubians "bringing live animals and produce of their land" as tribute to Ramesses II. Published in *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II*, pl. 9.

all licensing fees. Since no funds remained in the Nubian account, Nims had to pay for the unwanted *Elda* from the Survey's budget. He complained, "The *Elda* still plagues us. . . . It was my understanding that when we turned over the Nubian expedition material, including the *Fustat* and the light railway, they [ARCE] were supposed to relieve us of responsibility for the other boats, and have a receipt to this effect. But I have never been able to get them to really accept responsibility for the *Elda* and we are still stuck with it here."[52]

The *Barbara* presented a whole different set of challenges. When it arrived in Luxor in 1964, Healey cleaned and painted the hull and did other repairs, but it was almost impossible for him to find the necessary materials. Yet the greater question of what to do with it loomed. Nims wrote, "The boys here are somewhat doubtful about the practicality of keeping it (in view of its all-wood construction), as well as about the utility of a boat of its size for all operations in prospect."[53] In July, there was a discussion about retrofitting the *Barbara* for what seem to have been touristic purposes, converting it to a cabin cruiser for four passengers with sleeping quarters and a crew of four: an engineer, pilot, cook/*suffragi* (waiter), and dragoman (guide). But this plan would entail securing an expensive commercial license, among other licensing problems. Nims wrote, "By restricting the use to members of the Oriental Institute and the staff, it may be possible to avoid a demand for a commercial license." But beyond that issue, "there is some dispute as to whether the launch was ever properly licensed by the Nubian Expedition." Another complication to the proposed refit was the crew. Nims foresaw problems with the guide, for "any dragoman regularly employed would be certain to represent himself as the official dragoman of Chicago House. An educated guide, such as Labib Habachi, would do well, but Labib, at least, might tend to regard such a position as giving him a permanent attachment to the expedition."[54]

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In the end, field director Wente sold the *Barbara* in 1972. Ethel Schenk, who had followed the whole saga, wrote, "I was so sorry to hear you had to sell [it]."[55] One wonders whether she was being sarcastic.

Publication of the Epigraphic Work in Nubia

The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II (OINE 1) appeared in 1967 under the authorship of Herbert Ricke, George Hughes, and Edward Wente as a joint publication with the Schweizerisches Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo. Seele wrote the preface of this primarily epigraphic book presumably because he was director of the joint Chicago-Swiss expedition. His prominence still seems odd—though not out of character, given his brittle relations with Hughes and other colleagues—considering he had nothing to do with Beit el-Wali. This first volume in the Nubian Expedition series was dedicated to Edmundo Lassalle, the vice-chair for the US National Committee for the Preservation of Nubian Monuments.

Like the 1954 publication of the Bubastite Portal, *Beit el-Wali* was a series of plates and plans laid in a portfolio. Many of the forty-nine plates were folded, some three or four times because they were enormous—for example, plate 8 measured 38 × 118 centimeters; plate 9, at 38 × 130 centimeters, was among the largest plates ever produced by the Survey (fig. 8.9). A thirty-nine-page booklet included sections on the "Architecture and Construction of the Temple" by Ricke (with the assistance of Carl Fingerhuth), "The Epigraphic Record" by Hughes, translations of the texts and comments on the superimposed cartouches by Wente, and an "Index of Egyptian Words and Phrases," which is unattributed but surely the work of Wente.

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9 Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition, 1930–1936

Breasted approached the work at Saqqara* from the need to preserve the reliefs in the mastaba tombs as documents of the advancement of humans in agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, and the rise of complex social and governmental structures. In his *Oriental Institute* (1933), he argued at length for the importance of the documents and their relevance, summarizing, "The place of these developments in human history is of unique importance in our knowledge of man."[1] But taking a different tack than for Chicago's other "scientific" epigraphic work, he also argued their art historical value:

> In addition, this great body of painted wall sculptures forms a unique treasury of art and therefore a fundamentally important chapter in the history of art. There has been a regrettable lack of adequate publication of these sculptures. . . . It is obvious that an effort should be made to record these wall scenes in photographs retouched and emphasized by a skilled artist in the presence of the originals, so as to bring out clearly their plastic character, and, wherever the preserved colors require it, in paintings based on such photographs and registering accurately all of the surviving color traces.[2]

The mastaba reliefs presented different challenges than did the temple reliefs in Luxor. Breasted noted, "The exquisite low relief modeling of these Old Kingdom sculptures is completely lost in the conventional line drawings. And neither process—photography or line drawing—reproduces the colors."[3]

Breasted solved the problem of funding the project when he escorted John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his family though Palestine and Egypt in 1929 and was able to show the party the remarkable Saqqara reliefs (fig. 9.1). He recalled, "Our friend became very interested especially in the preservation of remains of the Egyptian

Mereruka with his mother (left) and wife (right). Painting by V. Strekalovsky published in *Mereruka* II, pl. 159.

* The name of the expedition was "Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition," but in the correspondence the name of the site is usually spelled "Sakkara," and the currently favored spelling "Saqqara" is also used.

Figure 9.1. Relief from the mastaba of Mereruka depicting hunting in the marshes. Published in *Mereruka* I, pl. 10. Photo: L. Thompson, ISAC Museum Archives.

paintings and their publication in color. . . . Finally, within the last few days he has agreed to finance the copying of the Sakkara Mastabas and their publication in color, in so far as the colors survive, making a total of some 500 plates, of which probably 125 will be in color."[4] The Saqqara project was "personally financed" by Rockefeller because of his interest in the project.*

As with so many of Breasted's ideas, he thought big. The Sakkarah Expedition was funded with $200,000 for five years of fieldwork and a final year of editorial work (the equivalent of $4.5 million in 2024). The budget was apportioned between $115,750 for operations (including the expedition house) and $84,250 for publications. The publications budget included the mastabas of Ti (one volume, 92 plates, $14,700), Mereruka (one volume, 135 plates, $24,000), Ptah-hotep (one volume, 90 plates, $15,200), and "Kegmne and Three Small Tombs" (one volume, 110 plates, $19,500). Each of the four volumes was to have a print run of 300 copies.[5]

The plan changed over the years. In 1933, Breasted envisioned "at least five folios"[6] encompassing 500 plates, 125 to 150 of them in color, that would appear by 1938 or 1939, although the gift from Rockefeller specified that only four be completed by 1936. By 1934, the plan had climbed to ten volumes together containing 658 plates consisting of color and line drawings and photographs of the mastabas of Mereruka, Ti, Neferseshemre, Neferseshemptah, Ankhmahor, Idut, Kaiki, Ptah-

* Wilson to Nelson, 15 January 1936, ISAC Museum Archives. This was also the case with the Abydos Expedition and the Davies-Gardiner *Ancient Egyptian Paintings* publication. All three were funded at the same time, on the same basis, described as "a special budget with a definite appropriation." The funds for the three projects were administered by the Oriental Institute (Wilson to Duell, 18 January 1936, ISAC Museum Archives).

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Figure 9.2. Prentice Duell, field director of the Sakkarah Expedition in the courtyard of Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

hotep, and Akhethotep, a different list from that in the original funding document. That report outlined a publication schedule over the course of six years at a total budget (going forward) of $180,000.[7]

Breasted had the man to lead the project: Prentice Duell (fig. 9.2), an art historian from Bryn Mawr College who specialized in "salvaging wall paintings in the Etruscan tombs,"[8] who Breasted was sure "will jump at the chance for such an undertaking."[9] On July 29, 1930, Duell was offered and accepted a five-year contract as the field director of the new Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition, and in 1931 he was also appointed nonresident associate professor of ancient Mediterranean art at the University of Chicago. He was highly regarded by Breasted and Harold Nelson. In July 1930, Nelson remarked to Breasted, "Personally, I hope Duell can be retained, for I think he is possible [*sic*] the kind of man who might take over the Luxor Expedition, should I cease to be Field Director thereof."[10]

Discussions with the Antiquities Service began in 1930. On March 27, early in the negotiations with Antiquities Service head Pierre Lacau (see fig. 4.3 in chapter 4), Charles Breasted, with his usual optimism, wrote to Nelson, "I saw Lacau this morning and found him quite ready to allow us to go forward with this new undertaking—as you know he is keen on anything involving prompt publication of results." The next day, Charles Breasted wrote to Lacau "to confirm my verbal application on behalf of the Oriental Institute . . . for permission to copy and publish, wherever possible in color and otherwise in black and white line drawings, the wall reliefs of the Tombs of Ptah-hotep, Mereruka, Gemnikai, Ti (in cooperation with M. Jouguet [of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale, IFAO]),* and also less important but long ago discovered tombs at Sakkarah. The Institute would be ready to begin this work in January or February 1931."[11] The reference to IFAO was an acknowledgment of French claims to copy monuments at Saqqara.

At the end of March 1930, Charles Breasted communicated further details of the Chicago plan for Saqqara to Lacau, in some instances not being totally forthright about the scope of the work. He explained, "The Oriental Institute is not asking for carte blanche to copy and publish all the mastaba tombs at Sakkara. In naming the group of tombs I was merely indicating the particular ones which were long ago excavated and which it seemed desirable to publish in color. If the Service des Antiquités considers it desirable to confine its permission to, let us say, one tomb like that of Mereruka in order that the Institute may demonstrate the methods it would be employing and the type of publication it hopes to produce, I assume this would be agreeable to Dr. Breasted the director of the Institute." He assured Lacau that the Memphis expedition would be modest: "The Institute proposes a staff of three people: Mr. Prentice Duell, the artist in charge; one photographer, and one draughtsman. Mr. Duell

* Jouguet was the father-in-law of Jean-Philippe Lauer, who spent his long career working at Saqqara.

would be accompanied by his wife, but her presence would be purely unofficial."[12]

Chicago knew there might be objections to its proposal. Breasted wrote to Nelson in early February 1930, "I shall not be speaking to Lacau for some time about a concession at Saqqara, where the Government, or the Service is, as you know, very sensitive about their rights. It is, consequently, very important that we should keep our intentions regarding Sakkara entirely confidential for some time to come. It would not do for these intentions to leak out while Lacau had still been unapproached in the matter, and it might prejudice him, and would indeed prejudice him, in allowing us to do anything in the Saqqara cemetery."[13]

Charles Breasted also was aware that opening Saqqara to Americans, especially from Chicago, might be problematic, and in early March he tried to reassure Lacau:

> The Institute fully understands that in undertaking any work in the cemetery of Sakkara the Institute would be a guest in terrain which as everyone knows is strictly reserved for the Government's own work through the Service des Antiquités. The Institute would therefore regard any permission it might receive to work in Sakkara as an act of the greatest courtesy on the part of the Service des Antiquités. In this connection I would like to make it especially clear that the Institute's present proposal must in no way be confused with its extensive operations at Luxor which are of an entirely different and necessarily much larger order. The suggested work at Sakkara amounts really to no more than allowing an exceptionally able artist to reproduce some of the many wall reliefs there which have long stood in need of publication. As I indicated to you in my conversation on the morning of March 27, the proposals I have made to you are for work similar to that now being done at the Temple of Abydos and on some of the Theban Tombs.[14]

Around the same time, Charles Breasted expressed his concerns to Nelson in Luxor: "As regards the new Sakkara project I can see that the chief obstacle I must overcome is fear on the part of the Service that the Institute will establish itself in Sakkara on the same large scale which attends its efforts at Medinet Habu—a thing which the Government dreads on what it considers its own terrain. The selection of a site for the house and the business of securing Lacau's sanction to the whole scheme, etc, etc, is taking the usual amount of palaver and backing and filling."[15]

They were right to be concerned, because the plan did meet resistance from Lacau, and on June 17, 1930, he denied the application.[16] But Lacau was not alone in his objections; other European and even some American colleagues spoke out against Chicago's plan. Cecil Firth, the inspector of antiquities at Saqqara, was especially frank, writing to Charles Breasted:

> I did not know when you spoke to me of sending an artist, draughtsman and photographer to work here that it was also proposed to build a house and work at Karnak. I find that there is a distinct feeling that to establish copying centers at Karnak, the Ramesseum, Thebes, Abydos, and Sakkara (besides of course Medinet Habu) seems a little of a monopoly. No one could or would enter this field were Chicago once installed in all the more important sites. Should not the learned societies in America & Europe who are interested in this kind of work be allowed to share or permitted to say that they prefer to leave the field clear for yourselves? I know that it makes for efficiency [when] a well organized concern establishes a monopoly, but from the point of view of the smaller man, it does seem to be a touch of ruthlessness in it.[17]

The request for the Saqqara concession was submitted at about the same time as that for Karnak (see chapter 5, "The Move to Karnak, 1930–"). Chicago's proposals touched on many sensitive issues, among them the 1925 Cairo Museum proposal that attempted to bypass the Egyptians' control over their own cultural heritage, but also presented a

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specter of Chicago's obtaining what Firth referred to as a "monopoly" on too many sites. Furthermore, Saqqara had been a special area of interest for the French—and Lacau, being French, was sympathetic to their traditional rights—but he also had a plan of involving younger, Egyptian Egyptologists, overseen by Service employee Firth, in the publication of the tombs. There were just too many ambitious plans being presented at the same (and wrong) time. It did not help matters that in December, Lacau had reprimanded Chicago for exceeding the agreed limits of its excavation at Medinet Habu.*

Indeed, in June 1930, Lacau wrote to Breasted, saying that if the Antiquities Service could not manage to find the manpower to publish the mastabas itself, then he would reconsider Breasted's request: "We would like to call for help only when our means of action are insufficient."[18] The following month, Breasted discussed the situation with Nelson: "And as for Sakkara, I don't believe that he [Lacau] had the remotest idea of ever publishing the place. The intrusion of an American institution with the men and the money to publish these great monuments of primary importance evidently rankles." He added some unflattering comments about Firth: "You can imagine what kind of epigraphic job would emerge under Firth's superintendence."[19]

Another sticking point was the request to build "a small bungalow type of temporary building" for a new excavation headquarters in the necropolis at Saqqara. Lacau did not want more modern buildings in the necropolis, stating that he wished to "keep our necropolis safe from another modern house; the Chief Inspector's house is enough. As you well know, it is a big concern of mine that archeological work respect everywhere the appearance of the ancient landscapes. The necropolis of Saqqarah should remain a necropolis."[20] His concern was heightened by the construction of the new Chicago House, the much larger and more permanent house underway in Luxor, a project that had to be negotiated with Lacau before a building permit was issued. The proposed house at Saqqara was viewed as a symbol of Chicago's plans for a similar, permanent presence in the Memphite necropolis and domination over too many important archaeological sites.

The sheer amount of correspondence indicates that the house was, in the Chicago team's mind, an important element of its work and essential to the expedition's success. In early July 1930, after hearing that the permission to work was denied, Charles Breasted telegraphed his father, reporting that Firth thought they might receive the concession for Saqqara if they dropped the plan to build a house. The staff would live at the Mina (Mena) House Hotel and use Auguste Mariette's house in the necropolis as their office.† He also suggested that they request only one or two tombs.[21]

Around the same time, Nelson advised Breasted, "I am sorry the concession at Sakkara has been refused for the present, for you notice Lacau has not absolutely closed the door on us. Firth suggested to me that if we could avoid the impression of trying to establish ourselves too securely at Sakkara and could also dispel the idea that we wanted to monopolize the site, he thought it possible that we might secure a concession after all, even for the coming season. If we would give up the idea of a house at Sakkara, that would remove one of the chief sources of fear."[22]

On July 7, Breasted again contacted Lacau: "Finally, in order that our artist may proceed next winter to make a beginning on his task, it is not necessary that a blanket concession covering the whole cemetery should be issued to the Oriental Institute; it will be quite enough if you will consent that we should begin in a single tomb which will

* Related to the discovery of the temple of Aye and Horemheb in late 1930. See "The 1930 Season" in chapter 4.

† Mariette was a French Egyptologist who founded the Egyptian Antiquities Service and the first national museum for antiquities, and who coauthored the libretto for Verdi's opera *Aida*. He built a dig house at Saqqara, where he resided when he worked there in the 1850s and onward. The house was a simple reed-mat structure (image at https://hef.hypotheses.org/1324).

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furnish him with enough work to occupy him for the season."[23]

The negotiations on the permit would drag on through 1930. In the meantime, Breasted was so confident that the concession would be issued that he hired Duell that summer. Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "In view of the refusal of Lacau to allow the Sakkara concession, what is going to be done with Duell?"[24] Nelson and Breasted decided to send him to Luxor to work with the Epigraphic Survey. Nelson reported, "Duell is becoming rather restless under the unsettled state of things and is talking of what he must do if the concession falls through. Meanwhile he is drawing and painting in the temple, but very slowly."[25]

All the compromises made for granting permission to work at Saqqara—not to build a house in the necropolis and not to ask for permission for all the major mastabas—did not allay Lacau's concern about Chicago's ability to successfully undertake the project, because after six years of work in Luxor, it had not issued a single final publication of its work. At the end of December 1930, Charles Breasted reported to Nelson, "He [Lacau] would prefer for us to wait until next season before undertaking the tomb of Tiy, by which time he assumes we shall have been able to arrive at some workable arrangement between the O.I. and French Institute, so that neither group will be working in that particular tomb simultaneously with the other. Of the remaining tombs we have our choice, effective immediately, it being understood we shall go at them and complete them one at a time. I have cabled the Director asking him to name his selection."[26]

Finally, on January 10, 1931, the Oriental Institute received authorization to copy and publish the mastaba of Mereruka. Permission for Idut, which Firth had discovered only in 1927, was issued on May 13. Both were granted on an annual basis. In spite of its aspirations and elaborate work plans drawn up in 1930, 1931, 1934, and 1936, these monuments were the only ones at Saqqara for which Chicago ever obtained permits. But its hopes were undiminished. In June 1932, Duell wrote to Breasted, "The Sakkara Project, if carried out exhaustively and in detail, will take from ten to fifteen years."[27]

After the permit was obtained, Duell and his wife, Anna, lived in several rooms at the Mina House Hotel. Nelson thought this arrangement was a good compromise, observing that Duell's travel time from Giza to Saqqara was about the same as that of the Luxor team traveling from Chicago House to Medinet Habu in western Thebes. As for the house, Lacau offered Chicago several alternative sites in Memphis, and in April 1931, Duell cabled Charles Breasted: "Have secured large Pennsylvania house at Memphis."*

The Staff and Seasons of the Expedition

It is difficult to reconstruct the staff for each season because, although everyone who worked on the project is listed on the title pages of *Mereruka* I and II,† there are only a few lists for specific years and some accounting records with names and dates of service.‡ When the idea of the Sakkarah Expedition was first proposed to Lacau in 1930, the staff consisted of "three people: Mr. Prentice Duell, the artist in charge; one photographer, and one draughtsman."[28] The staff always consisted of field director Duell; a photographer; one or two artists (fig. 9.3); and support staff (house manager, bookkeeper, and "cataloguer"). Photographer Leslie Thompson also functioned as a "business manager," and his wife, at least in some seasons, was the "the full time bookkeeper and was in charge of the kitchen."[29]

In mid-February 1931, Duell reported that Henry Leichter, the photographer for the Epigraphic Survey, had shot "typical portions of the

* See "Memphis House" later in this chapter.

† With the exception of epigrapher Siegfried Schott, who was seconded from Luxor to work on the mastaba reliefs; see further below.

‡ The title page of *Mereruka* I includes an artist named E. A. Warren. He is not on the title page of *Mereruka* II because none of his drawings appear in that volume. He definitely worked on the project in 1933, but it is not clear whether he was with the expedition longer.

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Figure 9.3. Staff in the offering chamber of the mastaba of Mereruka, ca. 1935. Left to right: unidentified, Prentice Duell, Vcevold Strekalovsky(?). Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

walls" throughout the tomb and was in Luxor having enlarged prints made in Chicago House's darkroom "to determine at what scale the paintings will be best and most effectively reproduced." Leichter's photos, considered insufficiently artistic, were to serve as key plans.[30]

According to the financial accounts, the Sakkarah Expedition operated for six seasons. Determining exactly where the team worked in the tomb each season is impossible. The line drawings are attributed to specific artists, however, so if that man's years of service are known, his drawings can be roughly dated.

The first season lasted from November 1, 1930, into spring 1931 and consisted of Duell and photographer Leichter from Luxor. The second (full) season, fall 1931 to spring 1932, saw an enlarged staff with artist Vcevold Strekalovsky, artist/architect Clyde R. Shuford, and full-time photographer Thompson (fig. 9.4). Marina Strekalovsky Kossoff was assistant to the expedition and also compiled a catalog of iconography. Leichter returned from Luxor to photograph Mereruka, and his salary was paid by the Epigraphic Survey. The staff all took Arabic lessons sponsored by the expedition.

The 1932 season began on October 1. The staff comprised Duell, Strekalovsky, Shuford, Donald Nash (artist), Thompson, and Kossoff, joined by administrators Mr. McWilliams and Mr. Dello Strologo. They moved into the new house early that season. In January, Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Board spent a week at Saqqara,[31] and in mid-April James Henry Breasted spent three days, describing himself as "very busy here with the work of the Sakkarah expedition."

That season was difficult for everyone—the expedition became aware that its budget might be cut—but especially so, personally, for Duell. In August, Nelson advised Breasted that "Duell feels that he has had little but criticism and no appreciation for the effort he has put into the Expedition nor for the work accomplished. As we know, the drawings he has produced are good and well worthy of the Institute. That there is not more color in the tomb is not his fault. May I suggest that a little appreciation expressed for the work would do him a lot of good."[32] At the end of that season Duell also found himself in a painful and awkward personal situation; in August 1933, Anna Duell filed for divorce to join Sakkarah Expedition artist Vcevold Strekalovsky, who had separated from his wife, Marina Kossoff, also living at the house.

The 1933 season lasted from October 1 to May 31, 1934. The staff consisted of Duell, Strekalovsky, and Shuford (who was not invited to return), artists Stanley Shepherd and E. A. Warren, and Thompson, Kossoff, and Dello Strologo. Breasted praised the work of the expedition season: "I am very much gratified that the Sakkara Expedition working in the mastaba of Mereruka has now fallen into its stride. It is doing both good and rapid work."[33] They returned for fall 1934 to spring 1935, with Duell, Thompson, Shepherd, Kossoff, and

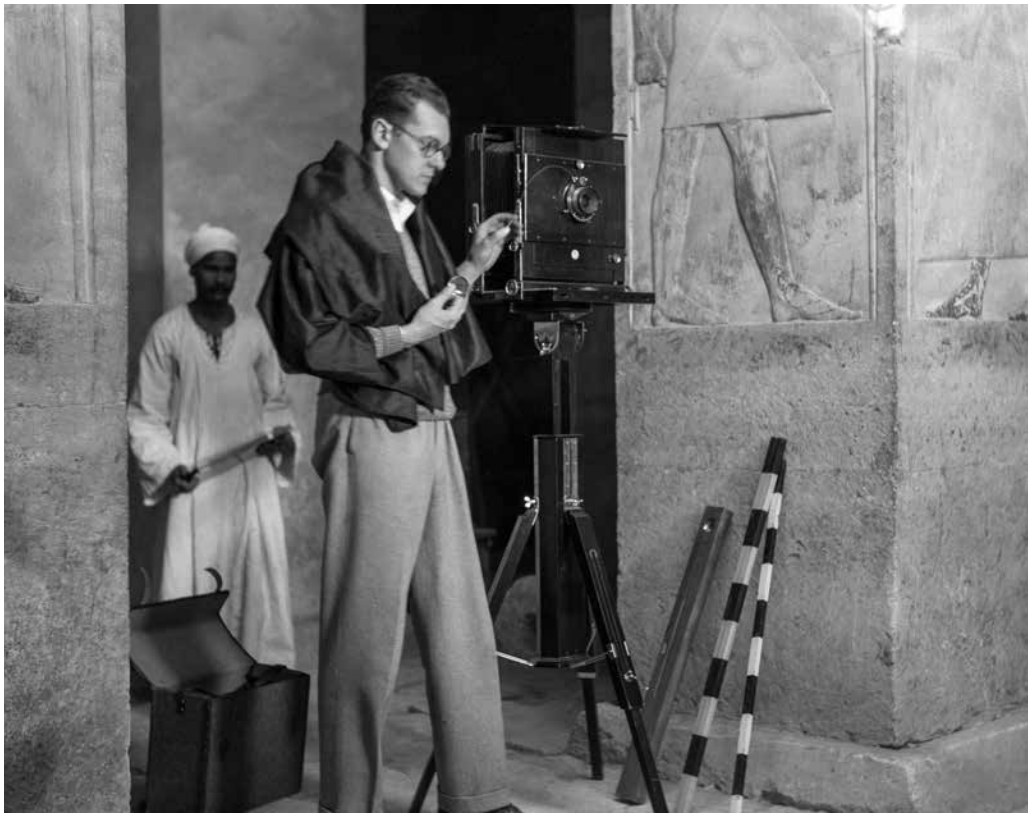

Figure 9.4. Photographer Leslie Thompson with assistant Ibrahim Mohammed Mousa working in the tomb of Mereruka, 1933. Photo: Thompson Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

new artist Martyn Lack (who was to have a long career with the Luxor expedition).

The sixth and final season ran from September 1935 to June 5, 1936, and consisted of Duell, Thompson, Lack, Kossoff, and two new additions: artist Raymond Teague Cowern and "research assistant" and epigrapher Charles Nims, who was seconded from Luxor and who would work for the Epigraphic Survey until 1972 (with interruptions in 1939 and the war years). In November and December 1935, Caroline Ransom Williams was with the expedition. As she recorded, "Professor Breasted has invited me to go to the Institute's Memphite house, and if conditions are favorable there, I may be able to stay for a little time thus near to all the Old Kingdom interests of the Sakkāreh necropolis."[34] She was there on December 4, when "in the middle of the morning word came that Mr. Duell wished us to return to the house," at which time he announced Breasted's death.[35] This last season was also marred by disputes between Shepherd and Duell about the attribution and credit for some drawings that Shepherd claimed were his.[36] Although work stopped on June 5, the official end of the expedition was June 30.

Methods of Recording

In 1930, while waiting to receive permission to work at Saqqara, Duell worked with the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor and became acquainted with its methods. However, it was clear that the Saqqara reliefs presented different circumstances that called for those methods to be modified; as Nelson recalled to Breasted, "We have had many talks on the method to be pursued at Sakkara. Photography will not do for all of the work as the distances are

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too small to allow of the use of a camera in many places."[37] But Duell found that there were only a few places—primarily the interior doorjambs—that could not be photographed with a "system of mirrors" and had to be traced.[38]

In December 1931, Duell explained how he regarded the different methods of documentation: Photographs and watercolor drawings "record the subject as to feeling, light and shade, modeling, and form," while a line drawing "gives the outline and disposition of details, but whatever feeling there is depends upon the ability of the artist himself. Both watercolors and line drawings remain fundamentally interpretations and have a certain advantage over a photograph in that all damaged portions of the wall can be minimized, thus allowing the composition itself to stand out clearly, as such; in a line drawing this may be accomplished to a greater extent than in a water color."[39]

Photography was acknowledged to be crucial to the documentation. As Breasted commented, "The photographic stage at Sakkara is of vastly greater importance than at Medinet Habu." Duell responded, "The photographs for the publication itself should be of a very high order and made by an excellent photographer, in his way, an artist; they should be beautiful and require but little emphasizing. At Medinet Habu, photography serves as a guide to the drawing and painting while at Sakkara, the problem is an entirely different one in that photography will be almost as important as painting itself. In fact, the better the photographer, the sooner I shall be able to have the tomb ready for publication."[40]

On the subject of line drawings, Duell wrote, "On the whole, however, I think that the reliefs should be reproduced in line drawing for this form presents most clearly to the reader exactly what is on the wall, but the publication will contain a sufficient number of photographs to give the feeling of the reliefs as they exist today and enough plates and color to record practically all of the color that remains."*

The Sakkarah Expedition generally followed the method for drawing employed at Luxor: "First of all, a careful drawing is made on an enlarged photograph in lead pencil, and later these lines are inked, giving the effect of light playing upon the relief from an angle forty-five degrees over the left shoulder. The photograph is then bleached, leaving the line drawing in ink upon the gelatin surface. The lines are restudied, touched up here and there, and the drawing is finished. . . . The method is that of Chicago House, and it seems to me one that is perfect, giving the maximum accuracy for the minimum expenditure of time" (fig. 9.5).[41]

To what extent the photos should be "enhanced" (also referred to as "reinforced," "retouched," or "reworked") to bring out features was the subject of a number of letters. On January 7, 1931, Breasted wrote to Duell:

> The advantage of the retouched photograph is very great. In the first place, it brings out and preserves the beautiful modeling of the mastaba relief. In the second place, it is much more economical of the artist's time. There are many lines which will be rendered clearly enough by the photographic emulsion. I think it much more feasible to use retouched photographs of the mastaba reliefs than has been on the large relief scenes on sandstone at Medinet Habu. In general, I feel very strongly that the retouched photograph is decisively the better method to use at Sakkara in those cases where the original colors have vanished.[42]

But just a few months later, Breasted reconsidered:

> I do not know if you have seen the proofs from Whittenham & Griggs, which represent their first effort to produce a satisfactory printed plate of an emphasized photograph. In the proof all the

* Duell to Breasted, 16 December 1931, ISAC Museum Archives. *Mereruka* I and II contain more photographs than line drawings (151 versus 130, respectively). Hermann Ranke's review of *Mereruka* I and II questioned why some "unusual scenes . . . should not have been given in photographs" (*JAOS* 59, no. 1 [1939]: 112–15).

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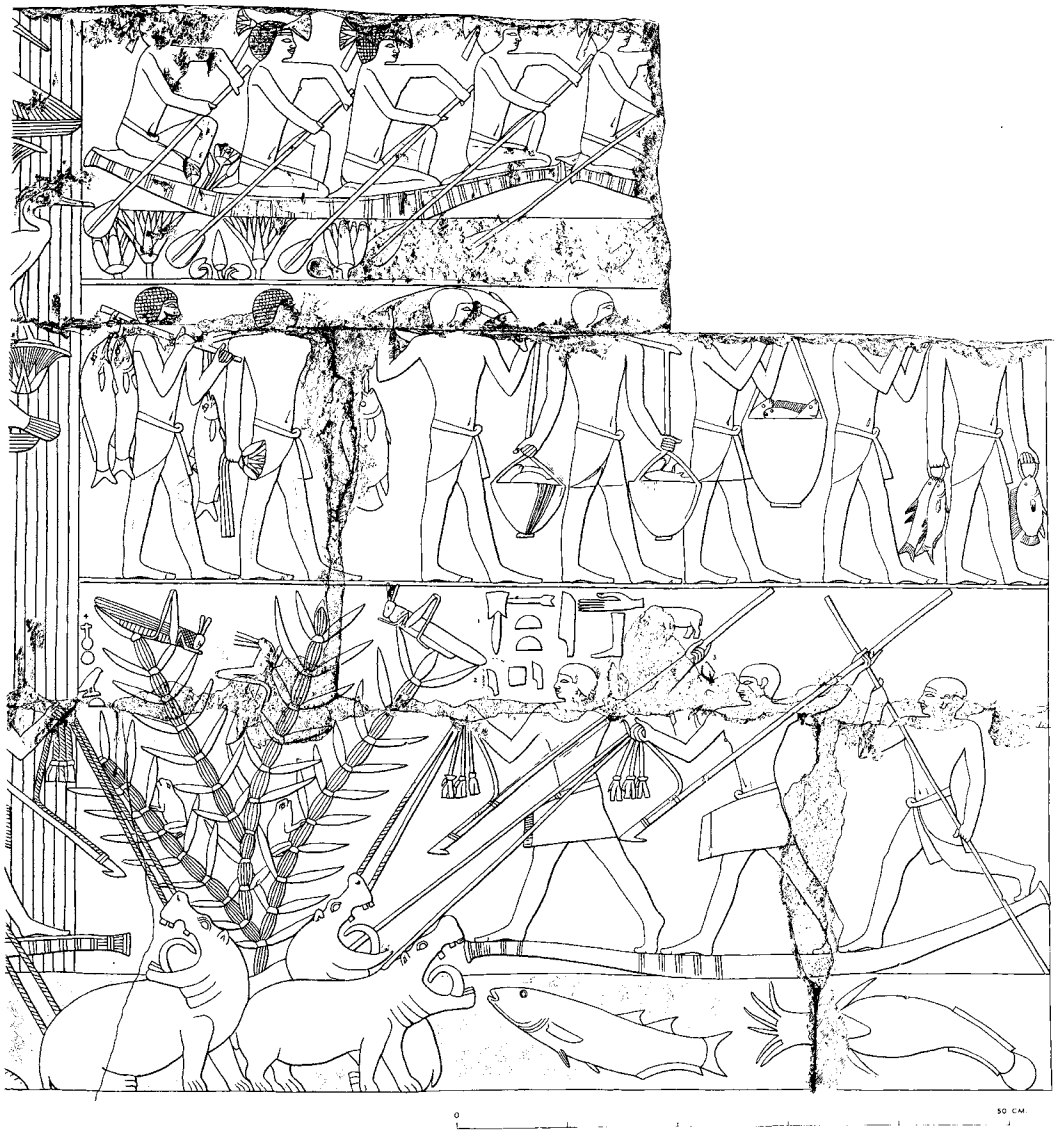

Figure 9.5. Line drawing from Mereruka depicting hunting in the marshes. Published in *Mereruka* I, pl. 13. Compare fig. 9.1.

brightness and life have departed. They are so depressingly dead and lifeless that we must regard them as absolutely impossible. Ganymed in Berlin seems to be doing better. And we shall proceed very cautiously with our printer for these plates. All this reinforces the need for using as few retouched or "emphasized" photographs as possible, for we should avoid any risk of additional technical difficulties for the plate printer. Consequently, the original photographs in the field must be of as high quality as we can possibly make them.[43]

Duell also wrote to Breasted to express his reservations about the ability of drawings to capture the subject matter:

> Your discussion of retouched or "emphasized" photographs is very much to the point and wholly in accord with my own view. I had come to the conclusion that the feeling of the reliefs cannot be conveyed by drawings and, furthermore, that a large number of color plates combined with line drawings in the volume would be not only inharmonious

> but confusing to the reader; I shall use line drawings only as key-plates, showing the whole wall at a very small scale. The various portions of the wall, however, will be represented either in color or by means of emphasized photographs on single or double plates at a large scale. Certain fine scenes which lack color I may wish to render in wash. In any event, the reliefs will be represented consistently as reliefs, whether they have color or not.[44]

The line drawings, however, would be an essential component of the projected "Volume X, the Corpus." As Duell expressed to Breasted, "A blue print is made of each line drawing and the print is cut into pieces, separating the various elements of the composition. These are labeled as to the name of the tomb and the wall upon which they appear, and they are filed under the name of the heading of various kinds of birds, animals, jewelry, costumes, etc etc, and inscriptions."[45]

Duell also elaborated on which technique he would use for certain types of reliefs: "Simple scenes or examples of exceptionally slovenly work on the part of the artist could be represented by photography alone (provided, of course, that the examples are of no real importance), and certain scenes in color which require no explanation need neither photographs nor line drawings to accompany them."[46]

The color copies of reliefs (fig. 9.6) and how they were to be made were of paramount importance. Breasted advised Duell, "When a scene to be reproduced has preserved a sufficient amount of color to justify making a colored reproduction and printing a color plate, you will of course be using the photographic enlargement as a basis and applying your colors directly to the enlarged print."[47]

However, Duell preferred a different technique than applying color over the gel emulsion of the photograph, as was used at Chicago House. He employed a process much like that used by Amice Calverley of the Abydos Expedition. In pencil, he traced a line drawing produced from a photo. He

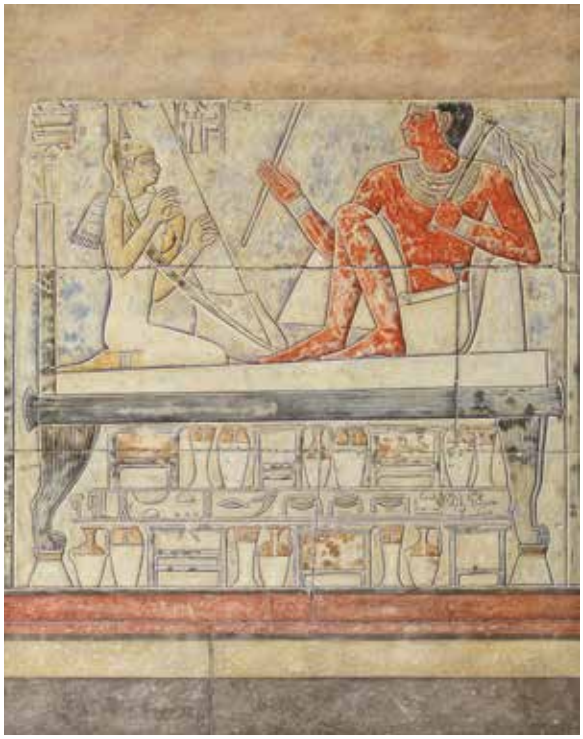

Figure 9.6. Color plate from *Mereruka* I (pl. 95) showing the tomb owner and his wife, Waatetkhethor, playing a harp, by P. Duell.

described his technique: "In making a watercolor drawing, I transfer a line drawing . . . to two pieces of Whatman paper by means of a tracing in pencil." Then it was "usually inked in order to assure definition." As Duell elaborated:

> The tracing upon the Whatman is carefully restudied with a rather hard pencil, giving a light line and sharp definition. I am then ready to begin the painting.* This redrawing at several times is important. One catches the feeling and spirit of the original and in the final painting, which is largely a matter of redrawing again with the brush, the picture develops as a whole. A relief is not a matter of outlines.

* A. M. Roth, "The Saqqara Expedition," in *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Near East,* edited by J. Green, E. Teeter, and J. A. Larson (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2012), 41–42, assumed there was no underlying drawing in Duell's color plates because of their lack of fidelity to the corresponding photograph.

> One can have the outlines correct and yet the drawing may lack all the feeling and spirit of the original. The artist should build up or construct the individual figures and in the end the outline or silhouette cannot be other than correct. It is a matter of working over the figure as a whole, and the same principle . . . applies to the entire composition. Then the painting will have the character and the feeling of the original. If one is to become acquainted with and understand the ancient artist he must lose himself in that artist's style. This can be done only by constant redrawing; in other words, restudying. After a time, one is often able to recognize at a glance the work of a certain man; in fact, one may be able to find him working here and there in the various tombs in the necropolis. At least I have had this experience in the Etruscan tombs at Tarquinia.[48]

Duell's technique was subject to some criticism, including Hermann Ranke's 1939 review, which commented that "the paintings are not as successful as one might desire, and do not convey the color of the original," and Ann Macy Roth's observation of discrepancies in the painting of the famous scene of Mereruka and his wife playing a harp (*Mereruka* I, pl. 95): "When compared to the photo . . . both faces show abbreviation of the outer edges of the eye and mouth, as if Duell were trying to foreshorten these features and push the faces toward a true profile view rather than the aspective view of the original," which she attributed to Duell's "lack of experience with Egyptian [artistic] conventions."[49]

The Publication Plan

The plan presented on March 11, 1930, called for 500 plates, 125 to 150 of them in color, "in not less than five volumes," to be completed in "not less than six years."[50] At that time, there was so much confidence in the project that Breasted suggested to Duell that, after the Saqqara work was finished, they start a program to record Middle Kingdom reliefs. As late as 1935, Breasted still envisioned "the production of some ten folio volumes of color plates and black-and-white drawings."[51]

The deteriorating economic conditions of the mid-1930s spelled the end of the Sakkarah Expedition's ambitious publication program. By 1935 (coincidentally the year of Breasted's death), Rockefeller had withdrawn his support, leaving John Wilson, the Oriental Institute's new director, to scramble for funds to ensure that the two volumes of *Mereruka* were published. On March 16, 1936, he suggested to Nelson that he "rob from Peter to pay Paul," as "the Sakkara funds will be exhausted at the end of this field season without sufficient money to complete the publication and binding of the first two volumes. I had a conference with Mr. Rockefeller last week and know that he would be most reluctant to provide additional funds for another field season and the publication of another volume. We can however, find sufficient surplus in the Davies-Gardiner Paintings and the [Abydos] project to complete the publication of Sakkarah Volumes I and II."[52]

In 1936, the stark reality was that the only tomb to be published would be Mereruka, in two volumes rather than three, although Wilson and Charles Breasted both repeatedly inquired about *Mereruka* III and encouraged Duell to do all he could to finish it in the 1935 season.* The following

* C. Breasted to Duell, 11 January 1936, ISAC Museum Archives. *Mereruka* III was to document the decorated sections of the mastaba dedicated to Waatetkhethor (chambers B 1, B 3, B 5) and Meryteti (chambers C 1, C 3, C 4) and scenes "in the tomb chamber, door jambs, exterior inscriptions and a number of detached fragments lying both within and without the tomb." In the work plan of December 4, 1934, *Mereruka* III was projected to have four colored plates, eighteen single and seventeen double line drawings, and forty-one single and seven double photos. In the 1936 plan, a hundred plates were projected. These parts of the tomb were the subject of several campaigns in more recent years. Alexander Badawy produced drawings and text that were never published; Ann Macy Roth worked there in 1985, experimenting with a slide-based epigraphic method; and in 1992, David Silverman, Ed Brovarski, and Rita Freed began copying the reliefs in Waatetkhethor and Meryteti. These two areas of the mastaba remained unpublished until N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq published them as *Mereruka and His Family—Part I: The Tomb of Meryteti* (2004) and *Mereruka*

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Figure 9.7. The Pennsylvania dig house before Chicago started demolition and rebuilding, ca. 1930. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

week, Wilson commented, "It is painfully obvious that it [the project] will not even complete Volume III, which is the last one on the tomb of Mereruka," although on February 1, Duell had reported that he was doing the drawings for the volume.[53] On March 20, 1936, Wilson telegraphed Duell confirming the decision of the Rockefeller board: "No funds for volume III."

Memphis House

Since Lacau refused to allow Chicago to build its "bungalow" in the necropolis, it was forced to explore other solutions. On March 30, 1930, Charles Breasted informed Lacau that Firth had suggested several sites and mentioned that Lacau himself had proposed using Mariette's house, but the latter idea was dismissed because "to remodel and reconstruct this house would involve us in costs equaling, and probably even exceeding, the cost of a small bungalow of the type as here proposed."[54] In April 1931, Duell telegraphed Breasted, having "studied situation thoroughly and advise abandoning idea of house Sakkara in favor of Memphis headquarters the latter being in every way more practical especially for work consisting of photography drawing and painting. House will need . . . remodelling."[55] Breasted still hoped for their own custom-built residence. But it was not to be.

The house they decided on was "Pennsylvania House" at Memphis, not far from the necropolis. Pennsylvania House had been built by Clarence Fisher in 1917 for the University of Pennsylvania's excavation of the palace of Merenptah at Memphis. It is assumed that Fisher, an architect, designed the 12 × 15 meter house (fig. 9.7), which was built mainly

and His Family—Part II: The Tomb of Waatetkhethor (2008). In his 1939 review of *Mereruka* (*JAOS* 59, no. 1, 113 n2), Ranke noted, "It is much to be regretted that the reliefs of the chambers of Mereruka's wife and son have not been included in this publication which thus, after all, is not a final one. A third volume, containing these important chambers, seems highly desirable."

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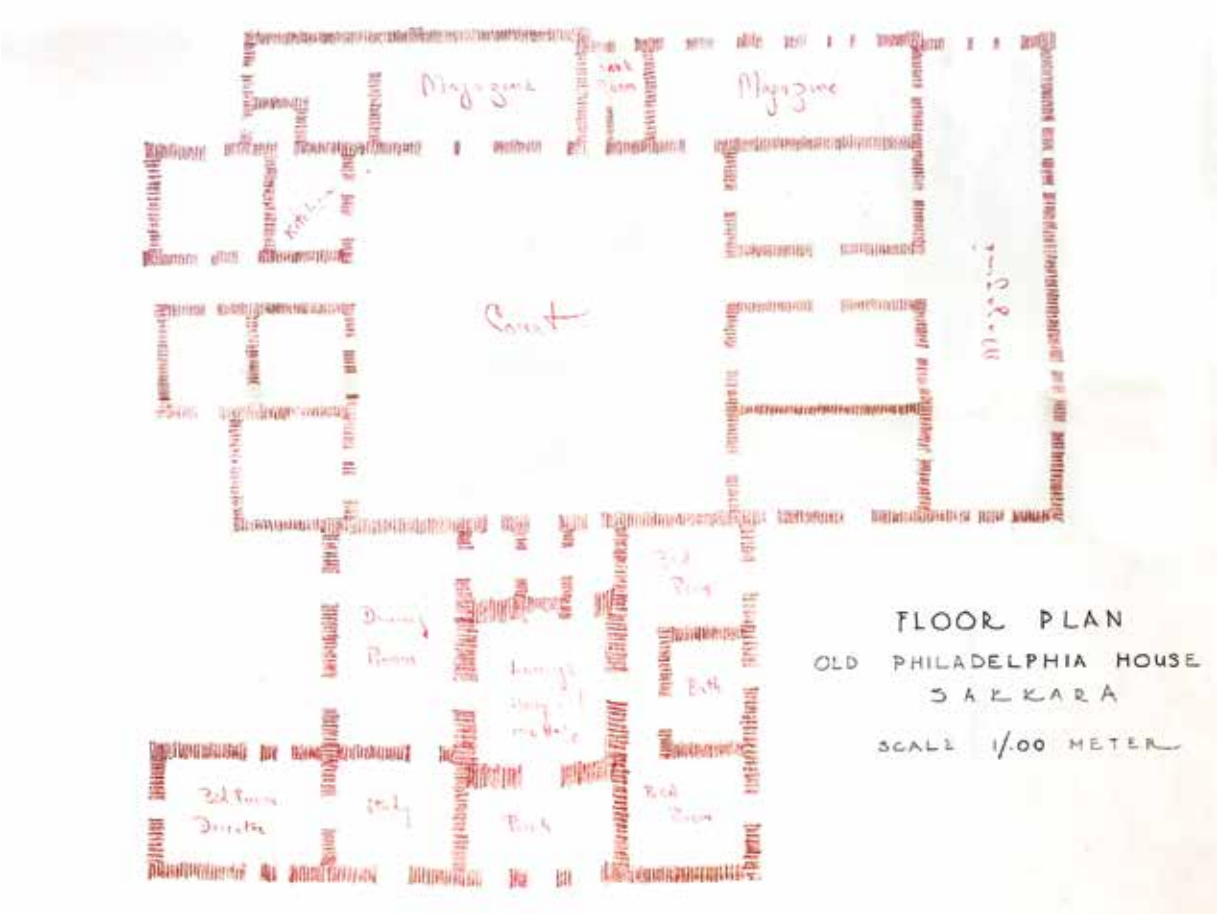

Figure 9.8. Floor plan of "Old Philadelphia House, Sakkara," by Laurence Woolman, 1931. The house had been modified and expanded since its initial construction in 1917. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

of reused materials. Its foundation trenches were filled with "broken and discarded fragments from the excavations which cost nothing except the labor of bringing them the short distance from the excavations to the site of the house."[56] As noted by Kevin Cahail, "the house sits on the fragments of doorways and columns of the Merenptah Palace which Fisher deemed not important enough to save."* The house consisted of a large porch leading to the central living room, which was flanked by a dining room, study, and the director's bedroom (left) and two bedrooms separated by a bath (right) (fig. 9.8). The kitchen, workshops, and storerooms ("magazines") were arranged around a rear courtyard.

A contract was signed with Lacau on April 22, 1931, authorizing Chicago to use and modify the house that had, since at least sometime after Fisher left, been used by the Service. The modifications were subject to government approval. In June 1931, plans for the rebuilding were drawn up by Cairo architect A. Bibikoff. He called for adding another room to the southwest of the former office to create a larger room, perhaps for the field director. The offices were to be in another building to the

* Fisher used the house during his six seasons at Memphis (1915–19 and 1923) and also when working at Dendera (1915–17) and Dra Abu el Naga (1921–23), keeping the use of it until he returned to Philadelphia in 1924. Rudolf Anthes used the house again in 1955 when he returned to Memphis. I thank Kevin Cahail for this information.

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Figure 9.9. Laurence Woolman (with hat) in front of the house under construction, with local officials, workmen, and Clyde Shuford (far left), who finished the project after Woolman left, 1931. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

northeast. This building, which may have been new construction, had a 28.5 × 16.0 meter footprint and was composed of a series of square offices arranged around a court.

This plan, too, was apparently unsuitable, and in April 1931, Duell was in talks with architect LeGrande (Ting) Hunter, who was working on the design for the new Chicago House. He asked for "exorbitant" and "unreasonable" fees, however, and in early 1931, the Breasteds and Nelsons had found enough fault with Hunter's work in Luxor that Duell "left Hunter entirely out of the picture in the matter of the rehabilitation of the old Philadelphia Museum expedition house at Memphis," contracting instead with Hunter's good friend Laurence Woolman (fig. 9.9).[57] Woolman had worked at Megiddo and for Hölscher at Medinet Habu in the 1930 season, and he was involved in the early stages of the planning for the new Chicago House. He agreed to undertake the work for six months at a rate of $225 per month, plus expenses for him and his wife, Janet.[58] On June 23, Duell telegraphed him, "Everyone delighted to have you do Sakkara House."[59] The contract specifically stated that the expense of the house "shall not exceed $13,500."[60] The two met in Philadelphia to discuss Duell's specifications. Duell summarized his desires in a telegram: "My study office should have private adjacent studio and both with large windows facing approximately north[;] also study should have plenty of bookshelves some large enough for Medinet Habu volumes. My studio in drafting room not essential and think sunken bath would be impractical and too difficult to keep clean," and sharing a recommendation of George Reisner, "kitchen should always be as far away as possible [from the dining room] on account flies."[61]

The plans were rapidly completed, and new construction started in 1931 shortly after the concession

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for the epigraphic work was received.* A contract was signed with the stonemason M. Mohamed Mahmoud of Badreshein. On October 3, 1931, Henri Gauthier of the Service approved the planned renovations, and on October 26, he invoiced Duell for the cost of the Service's moving out of the house and for demolishing parts that stood where new construction was planned. Chicago retained the guard who had held the position for the past seventeen years.[62]

A letter from Charles Breasted to Duell comments how, under Duell's management, the costs for the house spiraled out of control, from the initially budgeted $5,000 to $7,500, which with "items for supplies, equipment, etc., brought the item to $13,500 and this in turn was raised tentatively to $15,000. . . . But when your cable of October 22 made it clear that this sum would be insufficient to cover loose furnishings, car, instruments, etc., we were put to it for funds. We have therefore had no recourse but to 'purloin' from your project's publication fund the sum of $3,000 to be added to the foregoing $15,000, thus bringing the total available for the house, fixtures, loose furnishings, instruments (dark room equipment, cameras etc.) and car up to $18,000."[63] Breasted reminded Duell, "Please bear in mind, however, that when this budget was originally set up the Director had in mind a much simpler field house, to wit, a very small mudbrick bungalow just above the cultivated river flats, and a staff consisting of yourself and two assistants. Since the preparation of this budget, the whole picture has been distinctly enlarged; instead of the foregoing small bungalow we are expanding into a considerable house, your staff has increased by an extra man, the larger house connotes somewhat more native help and of course increased expenses for food, etc."[64] Duell seems to have been absorbed in the house project, and it became a priority over other work. In spite of Breasted's several requests for watercolors to display in an exhibition celebrating the opening of the new Oriental Institute headquarters in Chicago—after all, a primary goal of the Sakkarah Expedition was to record the surviving colored reliefs in the mastabas—on April 28, 1931, Duell responded to Breasted by telegram: "owing to work connection house situation securing staff and other things which seemed more important. Personally feel imposing display fine enlargements Sakkara reliefs would be equally interested and am having these made."

In fall 1932, the expedition occupied the new house. An album kept by Duell† and photos in the Woolmans' possession document the construction and appearance of the building. The mudbrick house, plastered with two coats of a mix of sand, clay, and barley, was approached through a pylon that gave way to a large, landscaped front yard and a broad front porch flanked by maroon flagpoles with huge (91″ × 51″) University of Chicago and American flags (figs. 9.10–9.11).[65] The house was divided into wings built around courtyards (figs. 9.11 and 9.12). From the front door, one entered an attractive high-ceilinged entrance "lounge" with clerestory windows and stairs that led to a balcony and rooftop terrace (fig. 9.13). To the left was the field director's lavish suite, which included its own large study, dining room, anteroom, lounge/dressing room, and bedroom (figs. 9.14–9.16). To the right, arranged around a courtyard (fig. 9.17), were eight bedrooms (fig. 9.18), two of them designated for guests. Behind the bedroom wing were the dining room, kitchen (fig. 9.19), and a large office.‡ Across the central court were storage areas.

* At the same time, new Oriental Institute headquarters were being built in Chicago and in Luxor.

† Now in the Fine Arts Library of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University; I thank Peter Der Manuelian for sharing it. A set of glass negatives that "represent the complete photographic series of the Memphis house" was sent to Chicago in October 1936 (Duell to Wilson, 9 October 1936, ISAC Museum Archives).

‡ In the "OI Staff Bulletin" no. 4 (March 16, 1932), 9, written by T. G. Allen, it is stated that "Professor Duell reports that he has acquired the library of the late Cecil Firth, which will be very useful in the future work of the expedition." There are no other references to a library at the Memphis house. The document is housed in the ISAC publications office.

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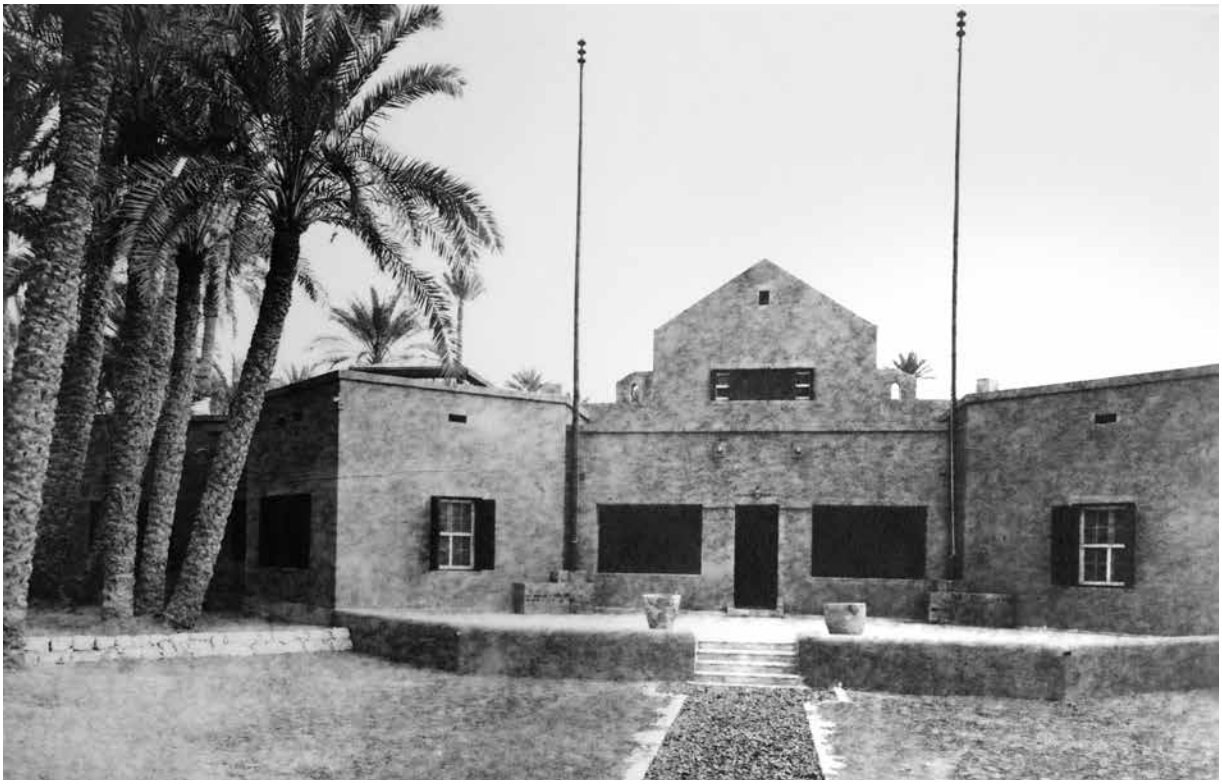

Figure 9.10. Facade of the renovated house (before the walls were plastered) with the broad front porch and twin flagpoles, 1931 or early 1932. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

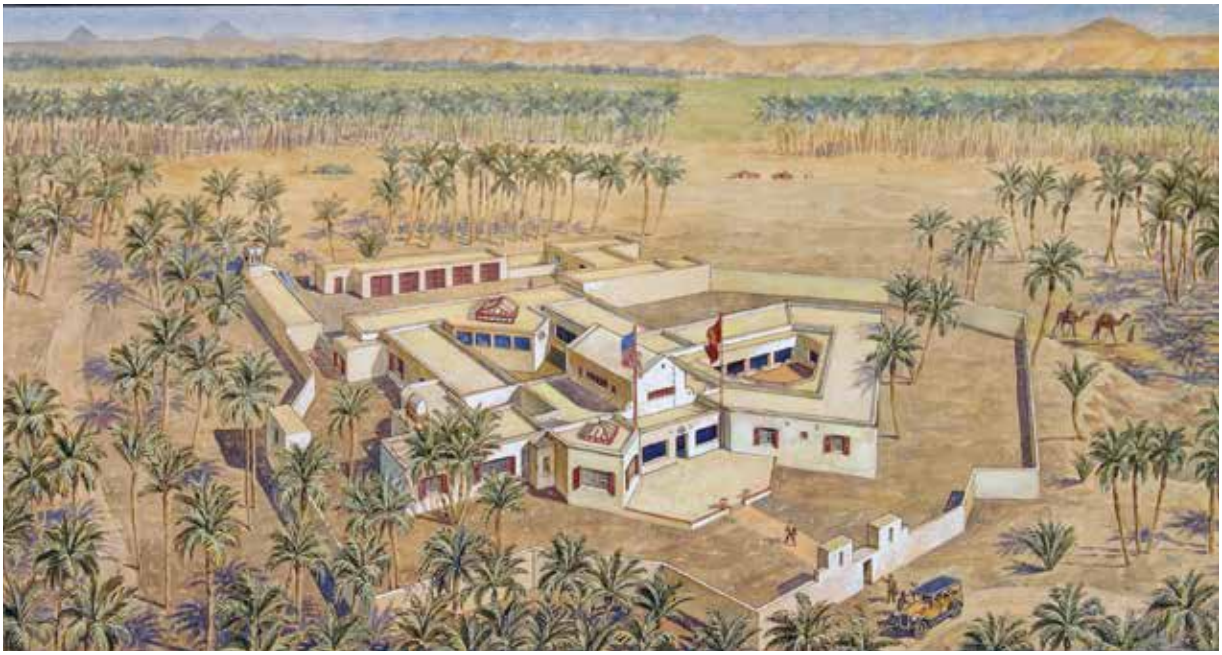

Figure 9.11. Rendering of the Sakkarah Expedition house by Laurence Woolman, 1932. Image: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

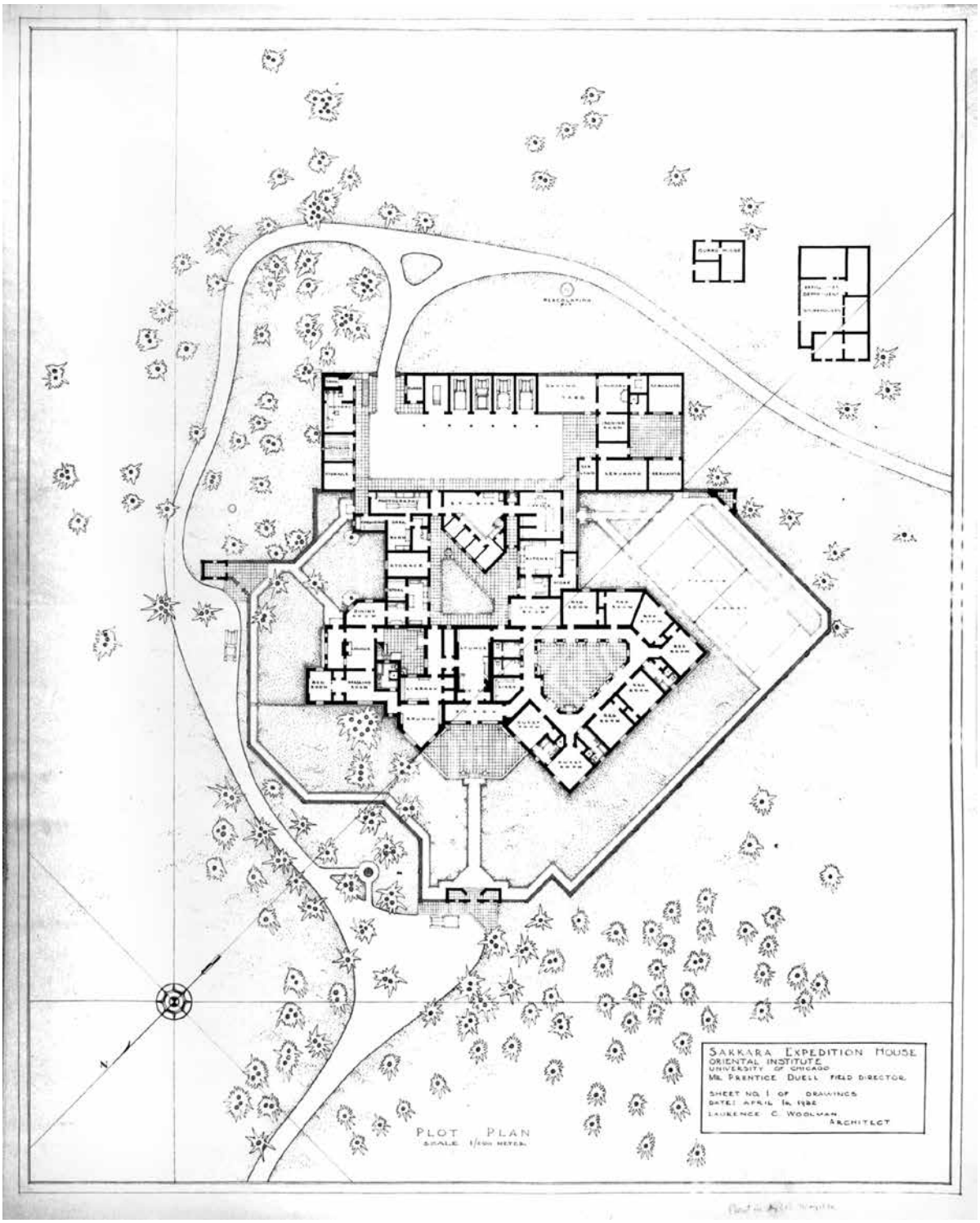

Figure 9.12. Plan of the house for the Sakkarah Expedition designed by Laurence Woolman, 1931. Image: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

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Figure 9.13. "General lounge" looking toward the entrance, 1932. The staircase leads to the terrace. The house was furnished by Janet Woolman. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

The photo studio and draftsmen's studios, the latter with skylights (fig. 9.20), were along the back of the house. Beyond the studios, to the right, were two rooms for "servants" and laundry rooms (washing, ironing, and "drying yard"). There was space for four vehicles, and what appears to be a service bay. Near the entrance of the back courtyard were additional rooms for batteries and storage. A three-room house for the guards stood a short distance from the back of the house. A large drain field was located behind the house. Plumbing and fixtures were supplied by Jos. C. Buhagiar of Port Said. Duell's bath had Twyford twin sinks with a long crystal shelf and a tumbler holder, a "cast iron rectangular 'Roman' bath tub" with brass fittings, and a shower with a white porcelain soap dish "fixed in the wall." The staff had to make do with enameled rectangular tubs.

Janet Woolman (fig. 9.21) was in charge of decorating the house, from choosing furniture, flatware, and crockery to arranging decorative items. Her notebook details that each bedroom was assigned a color palette (gray, brown, green, or cream—Duell's being green). Bed linens came from Davis

Figure 9.14. The field director's lounge, Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: Harvard Library.

Figure 9.15. The field director's study at Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. The lack of additional desks suggests the area was for the field director's use and not for the rest of the "scientific" staff. Photo: Harvard Library.

Figure 9.16. The field director's dressing room with the bedroom beyond, Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. The house had more, and larger, rooms for the exclusive use of the director than did Chicago House in Luxor. Photo: Harvard Library.

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Figure 9.17. The "staff court" at Sakkarah House with the palm groves outside the house, 1932. The staff bedrooms and dining room opened to the court. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

Figure 9.18. One of the six staff bedrooms at Sakkarah House decorated by Janet Woolman, 1932. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

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Figure 9.19. The kitchen at Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: Harvard Library.

Figure 9.20. The drafting room at Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: Harvard Library.

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Bryan in Cairo, and the beds were American-made Simmons, also ordered from Cairo. Each bedroom was furnished with a high chest, washstand, writing desk, bedside table, and another small table. One photo (see fig. 9.18) shows a twin-bedded room with upholstered chairs, its windows hung with patterned curtains.

The public rooms were attractively furnished with heavy wooden furniture, kilims, and local textiles (see fig. 9.13). Copper plates and trays adorned the walls, giving it a decidedly "neo-Oriental" look. The dining room had tables that seated four (fig. 9.22). A roof terrace ran around the courtyards. Tall palm trees surrounded the house, and a tennis court was located next to the bedroom wing.*

The photos in Duell's scrapbook include pictures and the names of the ten house staff, including four guards, two *suffragi* (waiters), a cook, a cook's assistant, an assistant to the photographer, and a chauffeur (fig. 9.23).

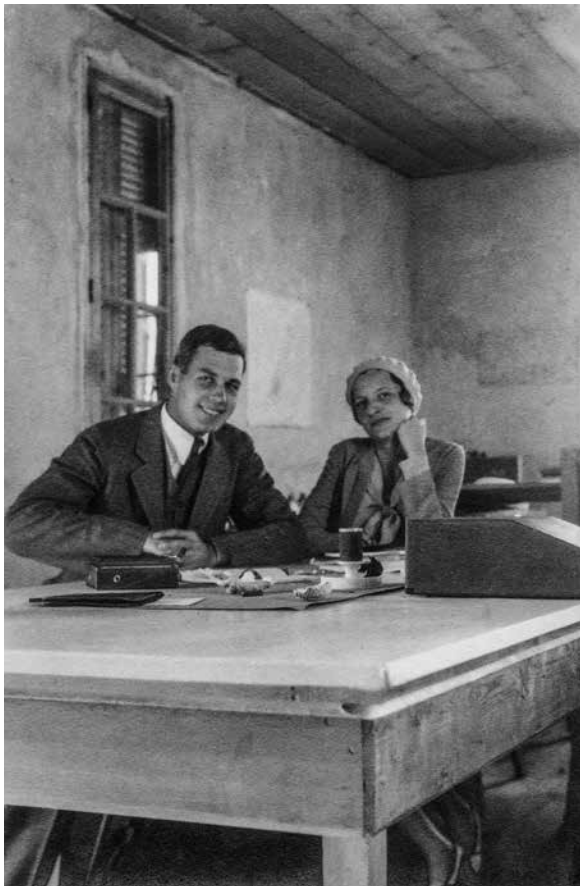

Figure 9.21. Laurence Woolman, the architect for Sakkarah House, and his wife, Janet, who decorated it, 1932. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

There are few records about daily life at the house. But some group activities are recorded, such as the staff riding camels on outings (in March 1934 and March 1935) and a "fantasia" behind the house with dancing horses, an orchestra from Mit-Rahina with *mizmars* and a drum, singers, and sword-dancing, attended by locals and their children (fig. 9.24). The fantasia was held during Breasted's 1935 visit to Saqqara shortly before his death. Other photos record visits by Joseph Lindon Smith and his wife, Corinna; William Stevenson Smith from Harvard Camp having lunch at the house in 1935 (fig. 9.25); and the staff relaxing in the courtyard (fig. 9.26). Unfortunately, the best-known stories of

* Tennis was so popular in the early twentieth century that a tennis court was apparently considered an essential element of expedition life. The modest excavation house built at Abydos in about 1907 for British archaeologist John Garstang had a tennis court (as well as a miniature golf course); see K. Sheppard, *Women in the Valley of the Kings: The Untold Story of Women Egyptologists in the Gilded Age* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2024), 206. Chicago House at Gourna had no tennis court, and in 1926, Nelson inquired of Campbell Edgar, then the secretary general of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, whether Chicago could restore and use a court that the government had built at the nearby rest house for the Ramesseum (also called the "Memnonium"). Edgar replied "that the court ought never to have been built; that the Department had been rightly criticized for having allowed it in the Memnonium, and that tennis and tennis parties were out of order here." Nelson posed a rhetorical question to Breasted: Why was it "worse to play tennis in the Memnonium than to allow the natives to live in the tombs of the necropolis?" (Nelson to Breasted, 5 December 1926, CHP 703). Chicago, or at least Charles Breasted, actively promoted tennis for the Chicago expeditions. In May 1930, he informed P. L. O. Guy, the field director of the Megiddo Expedition, "Please note in this connection that we shall regard the new tennis court as a necessity and not a luxury" (C. Breasted to Guy, 19 May 1930, ISAC Museum Archives; quoted in Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon*, 114). Chicago House in Luxor had a tennis court, now decommissioned.

Figure 9.22. The dining room at Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: Harvard Library.

Figure 9.23. The staff at Sakkarah House, ca. 1933. Photo: Harvard Library.

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Figure 9.24. Musicians playing at the fantasia held in honor of Breasted's visit, 1935. Photo: Harvard Library.

Figure 9.25. Lunch at the house, 1935. From left: Martyn Lack, two unidentified people (Donald Nash?), Joseph L. Smith, unidentified, William Stevenson Smith, Prentice Duell, Corinna Smith. Photo: L. Thompson, Thompson Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

Figure 9.26. Group relaxing at Sakkarah House, 1932. Left to right: Laurence Woolman, Clyde Shuford, Janet Woolman, unidentified. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives

life at the house are less happy: the Duells' divorce in August 1933, and the Strekalovskys' breakup due to a love affair between Strekalovsky and Anna Duell. On May 2, 1934, Mr. Duell drolly commented in a telegram, "Strekalovsky being divorced obvious reasons and am not renewing his contract next season very troublesome person."* As Duell noted, "Shepherd presented other problems," describing him as "a thorough going nuisance to everyone on the Expedition," "a bad case of arrested development, both physically and mentally" whose "principal trouble is that he should get married."[66] Although Nelson praised Shepherd ("He can paint as well as draw"), his social skills presented a problem: "His difficulties at Sakkara arose, partly from a very repressed sexual life, which his marriage may have improved, and from the whole atmosphere of the place. Just how anyone managed to work there I do not know."[67] Apparently Shepherd's social skills were not a fatal flaw, because he worked with Nelson in Luxor for the 1938 and 1939 seasons and again from 1946 through the 1948 season.

Duell also had additional space in the necropolis to use as an office. In mid-February 1931, he wrote, "For working quarters, I have taken two rooms in the Mariette house and am adding a third room. I drew a plan making my portion separate from the rest of the house and it will be quite satisfactory."[68] But by mid-April, he had changed his mind and arranged for a "large drafting room with skylights in mastaba next door [to] Mereruka" (the tomb of Kagemni), which Chicago also planned to publish.[69] The same letter contains this unclear comment: "But am insisting upon house for myself

* Strekalovsky and Anna Duell were married in Paris in 1935. In 1937, they moved to Boston, where Strekalovsky had a position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ironically, Prentice Duell worked at the nearby Fogg Art Museum at Harvard from 1939 to 1960. I thank Peter Der Manuelian for this information.

there in view of future possibilities and can probably secure same," which suggests that he wanted his own small house in the necropolis in addition to the Memphis house.

The End of the Expedition, 1936

In January 1936, Oriental Institute director Wilson reported that the original funding "will be exhausted at the end of the present field season" and that Rockefeller had asked for an accounting of progress on the project.[70] Wilson repeatedly assured Duell that the imminent end of the funding was not due to the quality of the work. He also stressed that it was "not precipitated by [the] director's death but long indicated and now requested by [the] New York group."[71]

In mid-January, Wilson met with Rockefeller representatives. Wilson wrote to Duell, "The future of the Sakkarah Expedition thus rests on our conferences with the donor and his decision as to his future policy in support of the project."[72] He urgently requested that Duell make a strong case for the continuance of the project, citing some of the major challenges: "There are, of course, many more factors such as our failure to attain anything like our original program, the difficulties of the present world economic situation, and the great expense of maintaining an expedition in the field. . . . We shall state your case as cogently as possible. It must be based on carefully organized figures of the present status. Until we have this statement in hand and are able to present it to the donor, we can give you no intimation about the future of the Sakkarah Expedition."[73] He also wrote, "We count on you to give us all possible help in organizing a statement which we may lay before Mr. Rockefeller," and repeatedly inquired about the progress of *Mereruka* III, wanting to know the earliest possible date for its completion.[74]

Duell submitted a lengthy summary of the work, dated January 23, 1936, based on the 1934 work plan, which in turn was based on Breasted's ambitious vision of 1930. Rather than reevaluating the entire situation and producing a new report, Duell replicated sections of the 1934 plan word for word. Considering the severity of the economic problem and the tone of Wilson's entreaties to present a concise and presumably pared-down plan—and especially as the expedition had yet to publish anything—it is astonishing that Duell presented an enormous and totally impractical proposal. This document could conceivably have salvaged at least the publication of *Mereruka* III, and perhaps also that of the mastaba of Idut, which had been photographed by the middle of April 1931.[75]

Rather than reconfiguring and perhaps abbreviating the project, Duell's 1936 "Estimate" still included ten mastabas in nine volumes and the "Corpus" in the tenth and final one.[76] Duell even expressed uncertainty about parts of the plan he was presenting: "I would judge the 'three small tombs' mentioned [by Breasted] are those of Neferseshemre, Neferseshemptah and Ankhmahor," although those three tombs were clearly listed in the 1934 report. He summarized the progress by saying *Mereruka* I and II were "essentially completed—however, there are eight more volumes to be done, consisting of a total of 666 plates." He suggested that reinforced photographs take the place of the more time-consuming line drawings, estimating that if that method were adopted, the project could be completed in "eight more seasons." Rather than make suggestions for a more economical operation, Duell proposed adding staff and increasing some salaries. He estimated each season would cost $33,750, making the total project budget $270,000 (the equivalent of $6.1 million in 2024).*

It is difficult, years later, to interpret the situation. It appears that Wilson was eager to present a pared-down budget to Rockefeller, perhaps one that would cover only the last volume of *Mereruka* and possibly Idut (the only monuments that Chicago actually had permission to publish), while Duell

* Both figures reflect an increase from the 1934 report, where the sums were $30,000 and $180,000, respectively.

unwaveringly stuck with the original, elaborate publication plan regardless of financial realities. In retrospect, a proposal for eight additional years and $270,000 to continue a project for which the funder had, in six years, seen no results seems ludicrous.

On January 22, just a day before Duell submitted his revised estimate, Nims sent Wilson an astounding letter that asked for the same salary as the epigraphers, although he was only a research assistant in his first year in the field. Further, he enclosed an unsolicited two-page report titled "The Status of the Work of the Sakkarah Expedition," in which he presented his own estimate of how much work had been done and how much remained to be done, and critiqued the work of Cowern ("developing into a good artist, but some of his first work had had to be redone") and Lack ("his carefulness means he does not work with any rapidity"). Nims, who intimated that photographer Thompson supported the report even though it bore only Nims's signature, recommended that the tomb could be finished in one year through the use of "an almost entirely different means of reproduction of the walls than we have previously used"—relying on reinforced photographs rather than the more time-consuming drawings. He also recommended that another artist be added to the staff.[77] On February 11, Wilson responded with a letter of rebuke, reminding Nims that all communications with him "must be submitted to the field director for transmission to Chicago" and that "a long series of experiences have convinced us that field expeditions can be run only in compliance with these rules."[78] Nims's letter and report are breathtaking considering that he was not even a full staff member but merely a research assistant who had joined the expedition just that season, its sixth and final one.

It probably did not help matters that earlier that month, Nims had sent Wilson a chatty note reporting that Duell had left for Vienna in the middle of December "and we have had no indication as to the date of his return," that he had finished no new color work ("he works very slowly"), and that he took no new finished paintings with him to Vienna, thereby incurring travel expenses "which seem to us to be a bit needless"—all this during a time when Wilson was frantically trying to slash budgets and do his best to keep the Sakkarah Expedition alive.*

On March 16, 1936, Wilson wrote to Duell:

> During this conference, Mr. Rockefeller confirmed what he had implied in past correspondence: that he was not in the position to increase his original pledges for the support of the three projects—Sakkarah, Abydos, and the Davies-Gardiner Paintings—in which he has been personally interested. This interest is unabated, but his ability to express it in financial terms is conditioned by the plight of all great fortunes in America today. He was pleased and gratified to learn that for accuracy and beauty of reproduction, the Sakkarah volumes will have established a new standard in their field. But while anxious that these volumes should redound to the credit of all concerned, he reiterated his regret that financial considerations precluded increasing his support beyond the amounts originally pledged.[79]

Wilson told Duell flatly that there was no funding for *Mereruka* III, much less for binding *Mereruka* I and II. The Sakkarah Expedition officially ceased on June 30, 1936, with an acknowledgment of that fact to the Service. As Duell wrote to Oriental Institute managing editor T. G. Allen that August, "While we ourselves have withdrawn from the field, it is doubtful whether any other of the large fifth and sixth dynasty mastabas at Sakkarah

* Although Nims retained his research associate status for the 1936 season, he was recalled to Chicago for a fellowship and advised to bring his "personal effects home with you," not a good sign for his return to the field (Wilson to Nims, 12 May 1936, ISAC Museum Archives). Surprisingly, he returned to Luxor as a staff epigrapher in the 1937–38 seasons, then returned for the 1946–71 seasons, serving as field director in 1963–71. See also Nims to Wilson, 10 January 1936, ISAC Museum Archives.

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will ever be published again," a forecast that largely held true until the twenty-first century.[80]

The final judgment came on May 7, 1936, when Wilson reported to Duell that the "New York Boards" of the Rockefeller Foundation had made a $3.3 million gift to the endowment of the Oriental Institute as a parting gift, and that "we are cancelling all field expeditions and reducing the Luxor force, our 'permanent headquarters in the Near East,' to a staff of three or four."[81]

Closing the Sakkarah Expedition was a major blow to morale. On April 1, 1936, Nelson had written of breaking the news to his staff in Luxor:

> I called the household together one evening, Steindorff* who is staying a few days with us also being present, and informed them of the closure. I was very glad Steindorff was there for I wanted to explain the situation before garbled reports spread about. I told the company that the reason for closing was entirely financial, that Mr. Rockefeller was feeling seriously the increase of taxation under present government in America and it was therefore necessary for him to curtail his gifts to various enterprises. I spoke well of the work done and emphasized the statement that the discontinuance of the expedition was not to be taken as a reflection on Duell. . . . Steindorff expressed himself as greatly moved by the whole matter and thanked me for making it clear to him. He will be able to speak in Germany, which will be useful.[82]

In October 1936, Duell shipped negatives that "represent the complete photographic series of the Memphis house" to Chicago, and all the photographs and collation sheets for *Mereruka* and Idut to Nelson in Luxor.[83] Late in 1936, Duell asked that the photographs and glass negatives of chambers B and C be shipped to him in Vienna, which Nelson arranged, later commenting that "he heard nothing further about them." At that time, the collation sheets and Marina Kassoff's catalog remained in Luxor, and in 1938, Nims worked on the material from Waatetkhethor and Meryteti stored at Chicago House.[84]

Duell and Thompson were charged with closing the house. Because the house and its furnishings were a gift from Rockefeller, they could not revert to the Oriental Institute but would have to be sold and the funds returned to the donor. The contents of the house were appraised by Toplis & Harding of Cairo. Nelson expressed an interest in the station wagon, household furnishings, and some of the scientific equipment. The transfer from Saqqara to Luxor was signed and the goods were packed for shipping, but Oriental Institute director Wilson canceled the sale and the process began anew. As Wilson wrote, "We cherish the hope that the Luxor expedition would continue on something like its present scale. But since that is currently impossible there is no point in adding to the equipment already belonging to the Luxor expedition."†

The Oriental Institute offered the house itself to the Service for its use; per the terms of the original agreement, they were also ready to demolish it. This transition came just when Lacau retired and Henri Gauthier assumed the directorship, and King Farouk had come to the throne, leading to paralysis in the government. Although acting in an unofficial capacity, Lacau accepted the house. There were discussions about making the house an archaeological field training school, a museum for artifacts from Memphis and Saqqara (especially the recently discovered calcite vessels from the Step Pyramid), or a headquarters for the Service. On November 19, 1936, Nelson wrote to Wilson, "I have heard reports that the Department of Antiquities is planning to

* Georg Steindorff, German Egyptologist under whom Breasted studied in Berlin.

† Wilson to Duell, 7 May 1936, ISAC Museum Archives. After Wilson canceled Chicago House's purchases, the station wagon was sold to Vacuum Oil Company in Cairo, a company that had done business with the Sakkarah Expedition and Epigraphic Survey and had once been part of Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company.

occupy the Sakkara house with an expedition of its own and to complete the portions of Mereruka which we did not cover."*

None of these uses were practical because of the cost of maintenance, however, and Duell wrote, "The last word I had before leaving Egypt was that the scientific equipment might be moved to Cairo and the house raised [*sic*] to the ground, since there will be considerable expense in keeping it under guard and in repair."† The Service bought much of the "scientific" and mechanical equipment, and the small furnishings—furniture, rugs, lamps, bedding, and kitchen pots and crockery—were offered in a carefully documented jumble sale. Staff members Nims and Lack bought small decorative items, Steindorff bought a brass jug, and Jean-Philippe Lauer bought several pieces of furniture. Nine members of the Egyptian staff, as well as other Egyptians described as "house servants," also made purchases.

Over the ensuing decades, the house has been used by several expeditions as well as by Antiquities officials. As of 2023, it was being used as a magazine for the Houston Museum of Natural History's expedition to the temple of Hathor at Memphis. The house is in very poor condition (fig. 9.27), its former elegance now impossible to envision.

The Sakkarah Staff after the Close of the Expedition

Duell left the Sakkarah Expedition and resumed an "independent work" life as a technical artist.[85] Although he offered to forgo any payments from the Oriental Institute, Wilson appealed to him: "We expect to make payments to you on the old basis over such a period as is necessary to supervise Volumes I and II through the press. However, the majority of your time will be your own and we do not wish you to feel restricted by any Institute or University ties."[86] Duell's appointment as nonresident associate professor of ancient Mediterranean art at the University of Chicago was terminated by mutual agreement on June 30, 1936. From 1939 until his death in 1960, Duell was a research fellow at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University.

Wilson tried to transfer some Saqqara staff to Luxor. He proposed that Thompson should become the "Business Manager and part time photographer . . . if Nelson's budget allowed," but Thompson did not serve in Luxor.[87] Nims also was sent back to Luxor, and as Wilson wrote to Nelson, "we could carry him on a fellowship for the coming year. He would thus be no charge on your budget." Wilson also suggested, "You might also consider the artist, Lack, who seems to be doing good work for the Sakkarah expedition. Again, it would be a matter of fitting him into the reduced budget."[88] After a hiatus of more than thirty years, Lack joined the Epigraphic Survey in 1968, working there through the 1975 season.‡

The discussion of transferring other Saqqara staff to Luxor continued even well after the expedition closed. In November 1937, Nelson advised Wilson:

> The only man from the former Sakkara Staff who would be at all satisfactory here is Shepherd. He was not a success socially at Sakkara, though his work was probably the best done there. He can paint as well as draw and from the last letter I had from him, I would judge that he would be glad to return to Egypt and especially to work here at

* Nelson to Wilson, 19 November 1936, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1250. Those sections of the tomb were not published until 2004 and 2008. See "Publications of the Sakkarah Expedition" later in this chapter.

† It was widely assumed that the house had been demolished until recently, when it was spotted on aerial photos not far from the current archaeological park at Memphis. (I thank Peter Der Manuelian and Kevin Cahail for this information.) However, other colleagues were aware of its existence because it had been used by the Egypt Exploration Society in the late 1970s.

‡ Many of Lack's drawings of Egyptian scenes and other subjects can be found on the internet.

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Figure 9.27. The lounge of Sakkarah House, 2023. Compare fig. 9.13. Photo: A. M. Marlar.

Chicago House.* Things being equal, I would prefer an American, but the fact that Shepherd was able to work without being compelled to learn the technique, and the added financial advantage of securing someone from Europe, seem to me to make it worth while to try him out here.[89]

This assessment certainly was counter to that of Duell, who wrote to Breasted on August 15, 1935, that Shepherd "did not really earn his salary."[90]

The Sakkarah Expedition and the Epigraphic Survey

The Sakkarah Expedition and the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor were closely allied, as Breasted indicated to Nelson in early February 1930: "The

* Shepherd was on the Luxor staff for the 1938–39 and 1946–48 seasons.

question of correlation of organization, and of actual field operations, as between yourself and the new staff at Sakkara is an important one which we shall have to discuss very fully."[91] Many letters from Nelson to Chicago and from Nelson to Duell comment on the project.

As mentioned, Duell spent two months in Luxor in fall 1930, learning Chicago House's epigraphic methods. Once the expedition got underway, Nelson offered help: "I have been wondering if we could do anything to help out the Sakkara work. . . . We have a very complete outfit for this work and when we move to the new Headquarters we will have an excellent set of rooms.* With mail communications so easy as here, we might do considerable enlarging for Duell if desired. I shall talk to him about it when he comes."[92]

There are several references, mainly in 1933 and 1934, to Nelson going to Saqqara to do collations.[93] Nelson was not always optimistic about the scale and progress of the project, reporting to Breasted on November 26, 1933: "They seem to be moving along and I hope will finish the main part of the tomb this season. However, I do not see how they can carry out the programme of color plates plus the remaining line drawings before the end of the season. But that is not my job."[94]

The title pages of *Mereruka* I and II list Keith Seele and Charles Nims as epigraphers. A letter from Nelson in early March 1934 refers to seconding Chicago House epigraphers to Saqqara: "Seele goes to Sakkara on Monday for collation and Schott will go about the middle of April. It is possible that Schott might go down again in May for the checking."[95] Nims is listed as being on the staff of the Sakkarah Expedition in 1935. Duell suggested in his memo about staffing for the 1936 season (which never took place) that Mrs. Nims could serve as "cataloguer" instead of Marina Kossoff (whose contract was not going to be continued), the implication being that if Nims was to be resident in Saqqara, his wife would accompany him and should be given a responsibility. Why Siegfried Schott is not acknowledged along with Seele and Nims on the title pages of *Mereruka* is unknown.

Publications of the Sakkarah Expedition

The format of the Sakkarah volumes was determined in 1931 on the basis of comments Duell received from colleagues in Europe and Egypt that *Medinet Habu* I and II were "unwieldy and too large,"† a charge to which Breasted responded, "It is clear that these criticisms by our colleagues elsewhere are due to the fact that they do not understand the problems involved." Nevertheless, Breasted met with the University of Chicago Press, and it was decided to follow the smaller format of the Metropolitan Museum's Robb de Peyster Tytus Memorial Series, which measured 48 × 38 centimeters.[96]

The color collotypes were printed by Max Jaffé in Vienna. Jaffé was selected because Ganymed, which printed the color plates for the Medinet Habu volumes, had "more than they can do," and Breasted considered Jaffé "about the only competitor of Ganymed, who can do fully good work."[97] The black-and-white photographs and line drawings were printed by Meriden Gravure of Meriden, Connecticut, which also printed the black-and-white plates for the Medinet Habu publications.

At the closing of the expedition in June 1936, *Mereruka* I and II were essentially done, and Breasted had written the foreword to *Mereruka* I. That year, Duell corresponded with Wilson and Allen about reediting Breasted's and his own introductory text. He eliminated references to *Mereruka* III and to other volumes that would not appear, such as the publication of the tomb of Ti. "The Memphis Series" and volume numbers were dropped from *Mereruka*, and they were retitled *The Mastaba of Mereruka: Part I* and *Part II*.[98] The two volumes, the only results of the very

* Referring to the new Chicago House in Luxor, which opened in 1931.

† Both were 60 × 48 centimeters.

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ambitious Sakkarah Expedition, appeared simultaneously in 1938.

Considering the emphasis placed on the importance of color in the projected volumes of the expedition, it is surprising that only 13 of the 219 plates in the two volumes (plus Shepherd's image of Mereruka that appeared on the cover of both volumes) are in color. Even more surprising, only four of the color plates were the work of Duell, who was appointed field director on the basis of his copies of colored scenes in Etruscan tombs. The early insistence that reliefs be shown in line art did not carry over to the final result. Between the two volumes, 151 photos were published, as opposed to 130 drawings.

The mastaba of Mereruka was republished, with commentary and translations of names and epithets, by Naguib Kanawati, Alexandra Woods, Sameh Shafik, and Effy Alexankis of the Australian Centre for Egyptology as *Mereruka and His Family—Part III* in 2010–11, and the sections of the tomb belonging to Mereruka's son, Meryteti, and wife, Waatetkhethor (which would have appeared in Chicago's unpublished *Mereruka* III) were published by Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq in 2004 and 2008, respectively.*

Conclusion

The history of the Sakkarah Expedition reads like a series of ambitious miscalculations, including the scope of the project, Duell's inability to manage his budget and time, and an overestimation of the amount of color preserved in the mastabas. A final puzzling aspect to the project is why, in 1936, Duell did not prepare a dramatically reduced budget that might have allowed the expedition to finish *Mereruka* III, and perhaps even to publish the tomb of Idut.

* Kanawati was not aware that Chicago had prepared these sections of the tomb (personal comm.).

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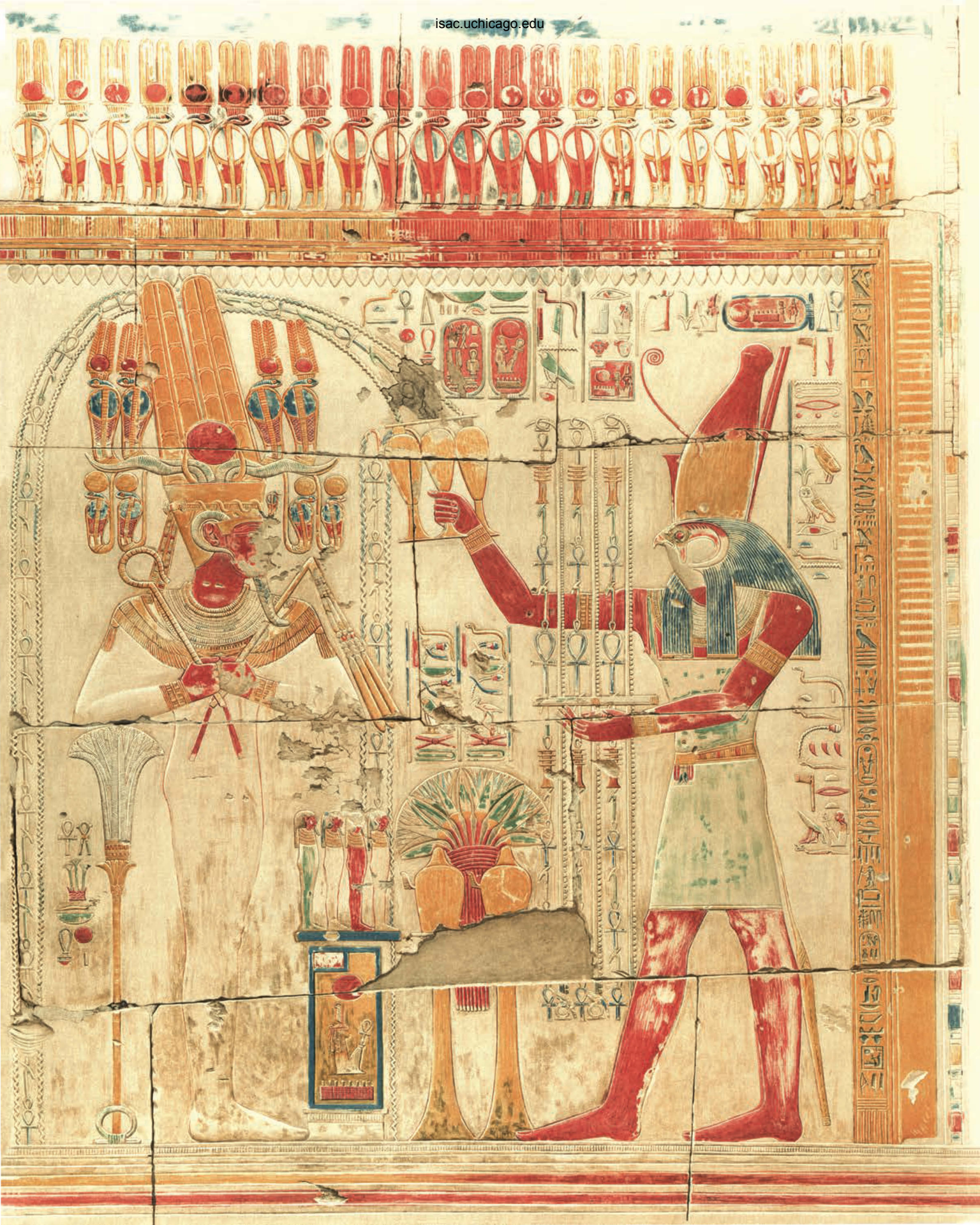

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10 The Epigraphic Survey and the Abydos Expedition, 1929–1959

Amice Calverley's project to make copies of the reliefs in the temple of Sety I at Abydos for the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) in London was intertwined with the work of the Epigraphic Survey both through the project's funding and in its extensive use of the facilities at Chicago House.

Calverley's project began in 1925, when the EES commissioned photographer Herbert Felton, who had been documenting the Osireion at Abydos, to include the temple of Sety I in his project. In 1928, the EES decided that line drawings should supplement the photos, and it engaged Amice Calverley as artist. The EES realized that it did not have the budget to support the expanded project, so James Henry Breasted of the Oriental Institute stepped in. In 1929, as he squired John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his family through Egypt and the Middle East, he took them to see the Sety temple at Abydos. This was a calculated move on Breasted's part—the fulfillment of a plan to create a "very comprehensive and representative body of written records and works of art, revealing ancient Egyptian civilization during the Old Kingdom . . . and the Empire."[1] This encyclopedia of ancient Egyptian art would be composed of the Abydos reliefs, often cited as among the most beautiful in Egypt (fig. 10.1); the colored facsimile paintings of Theban tombs being done by Norman and Nina de Garis Davies (fig. 10.2) (also underwritten by Rockefeller and published by the Oriental Institute); and the Institute's own work at Medinet Habu (fig. 10.3) and Saqqara (see fig. 9.6 in chapter 9).

In 1930, Rockefeller gave a direct grant for the work at Abydos* with an initial budget of £21,000, and later that year it became a joint project of the EES and the Oriental Institute.[2] That same year, artist Myrtle Broome joined the Abydos Expedition (fig. 10.4).† In October 1930, she and Calverley spent "a short time"

Horus, son of Osiris, purifying and making an offering to Sety I. Painting by Amice Calverley and Myrtle Broome, published in *Abydos* III, pl. 35.

* The same type of direct grant was made for the Davieses' facsimile project in Thebes and the Sakkarah Expedition (see chapter 9, "Sakkarah [Memphis] Expedition, 1930–1936").

† On Broome, see L. Young, *An Artist in Abydos: The Life and Letters of Myrtle Broome* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2021). Broome worked with Calverley into 1937, at which time she left the expedition to care for her father (Young, *Artist in Abydos*, 213).

Figure 10.1. Relief in the temple of Sety I, showing the king presenting incense to his deified self. Photo: E. Teeter.

at Chicago House, apparently discussing what techniques they would use for the color plates. Breasted was "very much pleased" to hear they were going to use the technique of Epigraphic Survey artists Alfred Bollacher and Virgilio Canziani, who applied pigment directly to the surface of the photo. Breasted commented, "The color work at Abydos would have been a life-time job if they had not taken up our method. Apparently, Miss Calverley has done so on her own initiative."[3]

But once at Abydos, Calverley and Broome developed their own techniques. This twist sparked a flurry of letters between Breasted, Epigraphic Survey field director Harold Nelson, and Sakkarah Expedition field director Prentice Duell discussing the Abydos technique, because they wanted to be sure that that method of making color copies of reliefs was not superior to their own.

Nelson met with Calverley and Broome in Abydos in early May 1931, and he came away impressed, writing to Breasted, "The two ladies have certainly not been idle. The result of their work is excellent and they are going to be proud of what they have done, or at least they may be proud of it. I went over the whole work for volume I and

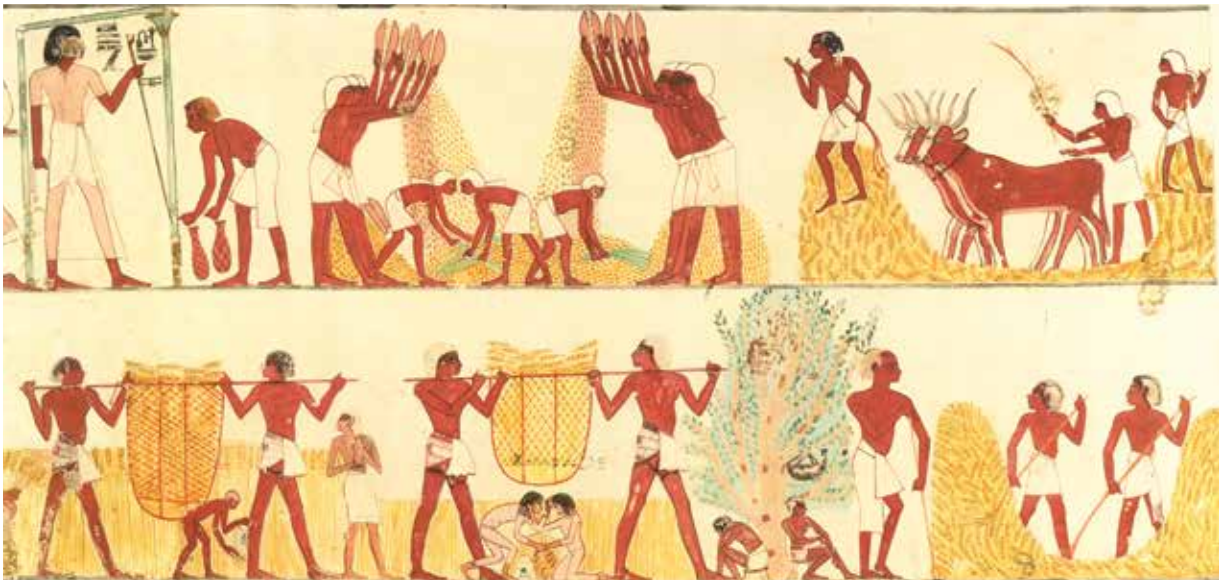

Figure 10.2. Facsimile of harvest scene in the tomb of Menna, copied by Nina and Norman de Garis Davies and published in *Ancient Egyptian Paintings*, pl. 51.

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Figure 10.3. Color plate by Virgilio Canziani showing the sacred barque of Khonsu, published in *Medinet Habu* IV, pl. 193.

Figure 10.4. Mary Jonas (general secretary of the Egypt Exploration Society), Myrtle Broome, and Amice Calverley at Abydos, 1932. Photo: Egypt Exploration Society.

also II and think that Miss Calverley has made a very correct selection of material for colored reproduction. She has included on her plates everything worth recording, though she has not included every instance of each subject."[4]

But Breasted wanted more information, partially because Alan Gardiner, the editor (and supervisor) of the publications, "seemed so uncertain as to the actual steps in Miss Calverley's operations that I wanted to be sure what she is really doing before taking any steps."[5] In June 1931, Breasted asked Duell to visit Abydos and prepare a report on Calverley's work. Since both the Saqqara* and Abydos expeditions were dealing with many reliefs that preserved

* The original publication plan for the Sakkarah Expedition called for 125 to 150 color plates. Ultimately, between the two volumes of *Mereruka*, only 13 color plates (and the colored medallion on the cover) were published. See "Publications of the Sakkarah Expedition" in chapter 9.

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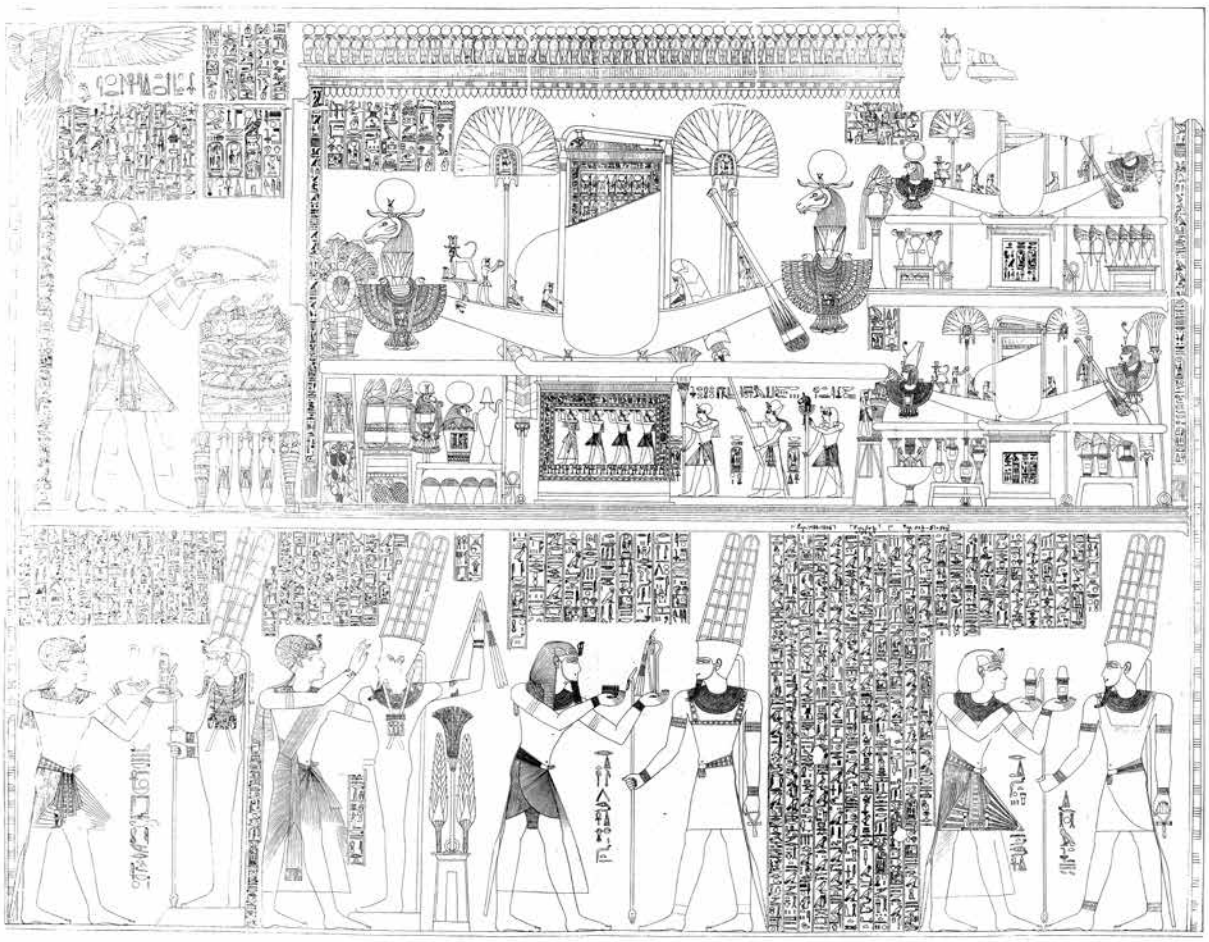

Figure 10.5. Line drawing by Calverley and Broome of reliefs in the Amun chapel showing the king offering to the divine barque (top) and performing the daily offering ritual before Amun (bottom), published in *Abydos* II, pl. 10.

their original pigment, Chicago was eager to see her process. Of special interest was Calverley's use of J. Whatman paper because, as Breasted wrote, "No one here seems to understand its use and I should like very much to have our Photographic Department learn about the methods employed at Sakkara and Luxor."[6]

In December 1931, Duell presented two long reports, one about Whatman paper and the Sakkarah Expedition, the other about its use at Abydos, the latter report being peppered with observations and praise but also snide comments and condescension. He reported that Calverley and Broome used the handmade "wove" (rather than laid) Whatman paper for both the line drawings and color work. This type of paper has a slight texture and lacks the lines that run through a sheet of laid paper. Calverley favored it because its texture was "the same as the stone of Abydos." Duell commented that it was the standard paper used for watercolor work.

He reported that like the Epigraphic Survey, Calverley worked from photographs, but from there their techniques diverged. For the line drawings, she projected the negative onto Whatman paper and traced it with a lead pencil (fig. 10.5).*

* T. G. H. James, "The Archaeological Survey," in *Excavating in Egypt: The Egypt Exploration Society, 1882–1982,* ed. T. G. H.

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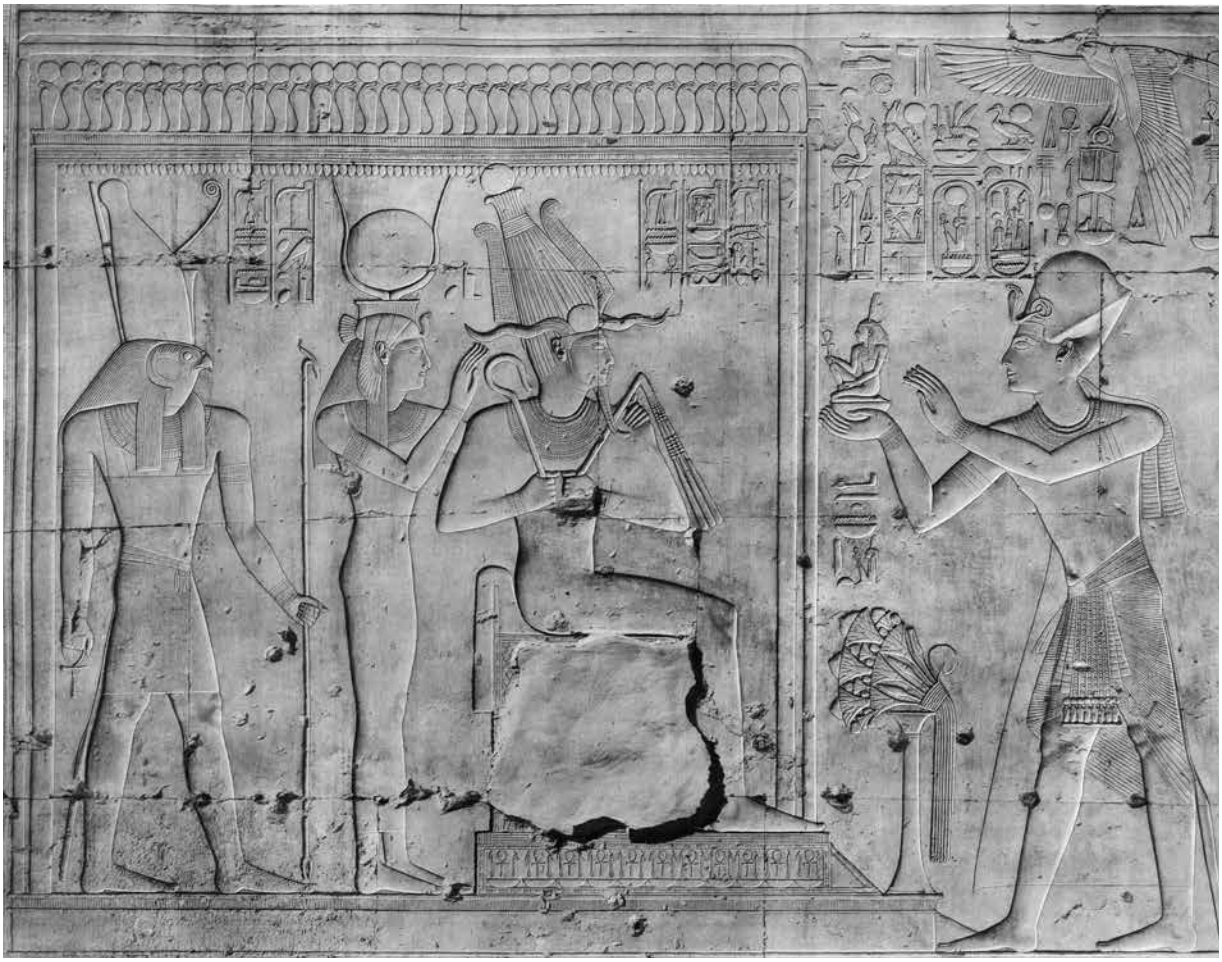

Figure 10.6. Reinforced photo showing Sety I presenting Maat to Osiris, Isis, and Harsiese, published in *Abydos* IV, pl. 10.

Duell thought that the Chicago method of tracing the photo directly on its surface in ink was superior.

Many of the plates were reinforced photos on which Calverley and Broome traced over the details to make them more apparent (fig. 10.6). This technique was used for relief that was in good condition and did not need to be completely drawn.

For her color work, Calverley again started with a photograph, but one printed on Whatman paper by the firm Whittingham & Griggs using the collotype process, whose impression was "very light and affording an excellent base for paintings."[7] Then she applied the pigment to the Whatman paper. Duell commented, "Miss Calverley traces all her line drawings on Whatman paper in the conventional manner. I therefore see no reason for her going to the elaborate process of having the photographs printed on Whatman paper for her color work." He judged the process to be too complicated and very expensive—the printing of a single plate cost more than £8—and concluded, "Certainly the amount of detail must be more or less the same in both cases." Duell further commented that "although she feels that she

James (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 154–55, states more specifically that Calverley did much of the work at night.

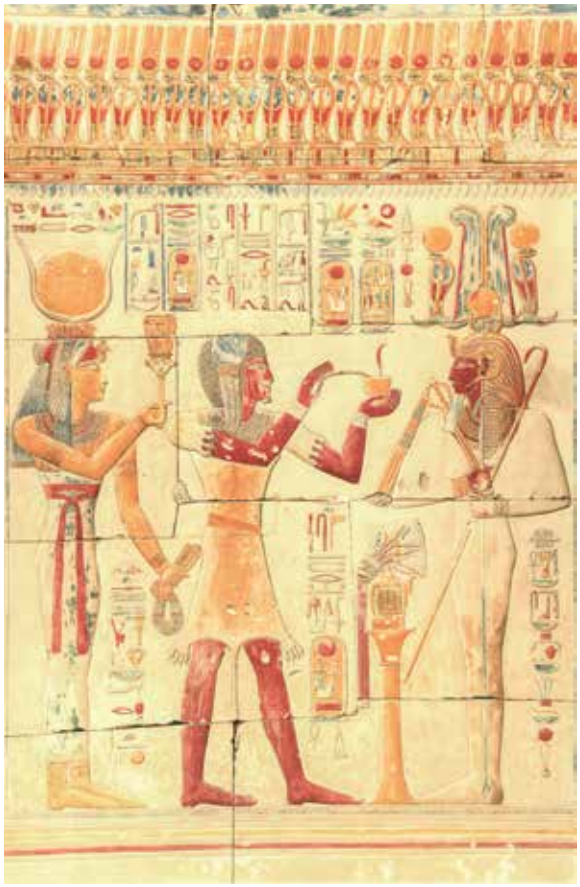

Figure 10.7. Color plate (*Abydos* III, pl. 40) showing Sety I presenting incense to his deified self. Compare fig. 10.1.

has invented the technique which remains more or less secret with her, it is not difficult to understand and to me it is nothing more than an elaborate and expensive variation of the method employed by our Luxor expedition" (fig. 10.7).[8]

Breasted conceded that Calverley's technique had some advantages. Painting on the gelatin surface of the actual photo "was tricky work and is slower than this painting on Whatman. On the photograph, the draughtsman must use his paints almost dry, taking a multitude of fine brush strokes, necessitating considerable time. On Whatman paper it is possible to paint with wetter paint and to cover more surface than on a photograph."

Nelson suggested to Breasted that the Sakkarah Expedition do one or two plates using Calverley's technique to see whether the time saved compensated for the cost of the collotype. He also suggested they continue their research to see whether they could "find some less expensive method of transferring the photograph, at least in outline, to Whatman paper." Duell was not convinced, writing, "This appears to me as going a little too far mechanically, considering that after all the painting should be a product of the artist's brush."[9]

In Duell's December 1931 Abydos report, he mentioned that Calverley had told him "she wants to give up her work at the end of the present season, which will see the completion of the seven chapels and her two volumes of plates, without text: I believe this work fulfills her original contract." He then launched into a misogynistic psychoanalysis: "Working more or less alone at Abydos for some years seems to have affected her nervously; she was slightly hysterical when I saw her here and several of us felt that she was not in a fit condition to begin the season. Many diverse elements enter in: she feels that she is wasting the best years of her youth; she resents being a copyist and instead wants to do something original, in fact, feels that music may be her forte."*

The news that Calverley wanted to leave the project was not a huge surprise to Breasted, who later wrote to Gardiner, "I earnestly hope that Miss Calverley may hold on to the end. But I can quite understand that after the novelty of her surroundings have given way before the tedium of such long continued work, she should lose interest. I have met her desires at every possible point, and have from time to time written her letters of the greatest encouragement, especially after the receipt of the plates which she sent us—quite a series of which

* Duell to Breasted, 16 December 1931, ISAC Museum Archives; apparently a reference to her interest in music and film. In 1922, she was awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London, and while there, she wrote an opera that was never produced. See Sheppard, *Women in the Valley of the Kings*, 197.

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have been on exhibit here ever since last December and have excited general admiration."*

Calverley's desire to quit the project was met with recommendations by Duell: "It is rather complicated but can probably be solved in two ways. Either let her continue as director with more assistance and financial backing or reorganize the whole project and put some man in her place, letting him choose his own staff. It is not altogether safe for two women at Abydos, and Miss Calverley and Miss Broome have had some unpleasant experiences." In closing, he vacillated between praise and criticism:

> Personally, I like Miss Calverley very much and only wish to praise her for her ability and the way she has carried on the work these years. She is a self-trained, egoistic artist, clever and with considerable ability, but she would certainly be a difficult person to direct or to work with, and to work under her would be even more difficult. Abydos is not our concession, and if it were we should probably not want Miss Calverley as its director, although I imagine she would like the arrangement and hopes that this may eventually be arranged. In my opinion she should never be taken on in any direct way by the Oriental Institute.

He closed with, "And I want to mention again that Miss Calverley was nervous and more or less hysterical when I saw her there. Now that she is at Abydos and hard at work again, she may be all right, but it seemed to me that she was unquestionably a nervous case."[10]

Calverley's primary complaint was about the financial arrangement for the expedition. The Rockefeller grant was administered by the EES, and the preeminent Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner was the project's supervisor. According to Nelson, Gardiner was not "responsive" to Calverley's requests for funds, and she was paying some expenses for the expedition from her own pocket, "which ought not to be." Nelson, who had spent many years in Egypt, was empathetic and even worried about Calverley's and Broome's safety.† Calverley had spent about £200 on a car, and Gardiner refused to reimburse her from the grant because "the car is not necessary."‡ Nelson thought otherwise, writing to Breasted:

> For myself I think it is essential. Two women living alone in a none too savory neighborhood should have some independent means of transport. They cannot send into Baliana§ for a car at all times. They must be able to secure assistance when it is needed. Moreover, it seems to me that the house might, with very little expenditure of money, be made much more comfortable.¶ I am sure were you in charge of the work, you would come to Miss C.'s assistance. I am afraid, if something is not done, she may pull out, for she is firmly convinced that, financially, she can do much better elsewhere.** Life at Abydos is very different from life here and a more sympathetic person than Gardiner would feel the need of the two women.

That said, he closed with, "I would not want Miss C. here, but I have every admiration for her at Abydos."[11]

* Breasted to Gardiner, 2 June 1932, ISAC Museum Archives. The exhibit was for the dedication of the new Oriental Institute building in Chicago in December 1931.

† Reginald Engelbach of the Antiquities Service also was concerned about them and placed a police guard at their dig house in 1931 (Duell to Breasted, 16 December 1931, ISAC Museum Archives).

‡ The vehicle was a Chevy truck (Kraeling to Hughes, 14 April 1950, ISAC Museum Archives). See fig. 10.8.

§ Usually spelled "Balyana," the nearest large village to the temple.

¶ This comment is at odds with other memories of the house being "a comfortable and hospitable home where all were welcome" and with "a happy atmosphere" (James, "Archaeological Survey," 154).

** Ironically, she drew only three months of her annual salary in 1956 and 1957.

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Figure 10.8. "Amice Calverley Sitting Writing or Sketching with Joey, Their Expedition Car, and Their Egyptian Servant." Painting by Myrtle Broome, 1930s. Photo by kind permission of Bushey Museum and Art Gallery.

Calverley wrote several letters expressing her dissatisfaction with the funding of her project, and Duell recalled her suggesting that if the expedition "fell through," Chicago House should "take over the work, sending some man to Abydos as a field director. She said she was willing either to eliminate herself entirely or to come out each season as a special artist on the staff. Personally, I am not certain whether she would actually give up the directorship and, moreover, she would find it difficult to work under anyone after having been director herself. She said, furthermore, that if she remains at Abydos as director, she will want a larger salary and additional members to her staff." He expressed some sympathy with her situation, commenting, "it would seem that she does need more assistance, and I believe, more financial backing. She has kept all expenses at a minimum and has been so conscientious in this that she has herself paid for all the work she felt was not satisfactory."[12]

Calverley was well known to the staff at Chicago House. Periodically, she would come to Luxor to have photographer Henry Leichter make photo enlargements for her.* A letter from Breasted to Duell requested that once he was settled into the Memphis house, he should invite Calverley and Broome to spend a day or two "exchanging" ideas about "photographic enlargements, etc. which will keep her abreast of our best knowledge of the subject. I am sure that you can do it tactfully and that in this way we can influence Miss Calverley without sending her anything that would look like orders." Yet the request was prefaced by Breasted's comment that the "problem of photographic enlargements"

* Her tracings were done from 1:1 scale photos, hence her reliance on the Chicago House facilities. See Nelson to C. Breasted, 13 January 1931, ISAC Museum Archives.

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is "not yet satisfactorily settled" and that "it is one of the stages in our whole epigraphic process with which I have never been satisfied. I am hoping you will make some progress in this matter as you develop your work in Sakkarah."[13] So perhaps Duell was also to see whether Calverley knew something that the Luxor group did not.

There was an undercurrent of competition between Chicago and Abydos, each sure that its method was the more accurate. In 1935, Breasted wrote to his former student and colleague Caroline Ransom Williams, commenting on the skills of Gardiner: "Gardiner has never provided for the careful collation of the finished drawings such as we insist upon at Medinet Habu and Karnak. I think there can be no doubt about the high quality of these Abydos plates, but without the rigorous collation which we always make I hardly think we can expect the same accuracy which our group in Luxor has attained."* For Calverley's part, the introduction to the first Abydos volume includes criticism of the Chicago method, pointing out that with her technique, "the unpleasant quality of painted photographs was avoided, and we did not have the oily, muddy-toned gelatin surface of photographic prints," and noting that her "method enabled us to reproduce the brilliancy of colour and soft patina of the originals."[14]

By 1936, the financial situation was grim for all the Rockefeller-funded projects, as they were informed there would be no further grants and they should do their best to wrap up their work. In February, Calverley told Nelson that she, too, might have to close. Nelson commented to Oriental Institute director John Wilson, "I do not know her grounds for this fear other than the general situation," adding, "If the Abydos Expedition closes, I would be glad to have Miss Broome on our staff. She paints and draws beautifully and would be an addition to the household." He was so enthusiastic about her that he was willing "to let one of the others go and take her on in his place."†

Even as Chicago was slashing its budget, Calverley made requests that Nelson in Luxor found increasingly difficult to accommodate. He wrote to Wilson, "Just received another letter from Miss Calverley wanting something as usual. She can run her place on very little money partly because she sponges off everyone she can find. . . . I understand she is more confirmed than ever in the superiority of her own work and the inferiority of ours."[15] In February 1937, Wilson, who was responsible for reducing the budgets of all the Institute's field missions, had apparently had enough, and he instructed Nelson: "You are no longer in a position to give Miss Calverley any free services whatsoever. In the old days it was a nuisance and an imposition, but we were able to afford it financially. Now we can simply say that we can afford nothing. If you wish, you may quote me as saying that the Abydos expedition must do its own work out of its own financing, without asking any favors of the Luxor expedition."[16] The cuts to the Survey funds forced Nelson to let the contracts of artists Leslie Greener and Robert Martindale lapse. They both went to work for the Abydos Expedition.‡

* Breasted to Ransom Williams, 10 August 1935, ISAC Museum Archives. Breasted was right—Gardiner's introduction to *Abydos* IV is tepid, to put it mildly. He wrote he "feels it is his duty to point out that it is nearly a quarter of a century since he last visited Abydos, and even then he paid no special attention to the Second Hypostyle Hall. Accordingly, although it has fallen to his lot to write this Introduction, he must disclaim any responsibility for more than a portion of the statements made herein. He is, however, confident that Miss Calverley's intimate acquaintance with the facts will have kept him on the right path" (*Abydos* IV, viii).

† Nelson to Wilson, 16 February 1936, ISAC Museum Archives. The 1936 season was the last year that Nelson could afford so many artists. In the 1937 season, two of the six were dismissed, and by 1939, the Survey was down to one. See chapter 3, "Medinet Habu, 1924–."

‡ Nelson made an uncharacteristically nasty comment to Wilson: "It is unfortunate that she employed the two men whom I should list as our least successful draughtsmen"

The Abydos project, like all expeditions, was suspended during World War II. In September 1947, Calverley asked Epigraphic Survey Egyptologist George Hughes to bring supplies to Abydos, so she was back in the field at that time.[17] That month, because of the "present extremely complicated state of international exchanges," it was decided that the grant money for Abydos would be administered from the University of Chicago rather than the EES in London, and the expedition became an Oriental Institute project. Under the new arrangement, "agreements made between the EES and the non-Egyptian members of the staff at Abydos should in the future be made between them and the Oriental Institute," which meant that dealing with Calverley—which was about to get very complicated—was in the coming years primarily up to Hughes in Luxor and Wilson and Oriental Institute directors Thorkild Jacobsen and Carl Kraeling in Chicago. Calverley was appointed an associate of the Institute and field director of its "Rockefeller Abydos Project."[18]

The closer financial connection proved to be very time-consuming for Chicago, because Calverley, rather than abiding a set schedule of regular payments for her and her draftsmen's salaries and for materials, photography, travel, and editorial fees, asked for lump sums, a request that the University of Chicago's financial regulations would not allow. The bookkeeping was further complicated by her practice of deferring her own salary, keeping the funds for unforeseen "emergencies."* Wilson and Kraeling in Chicago became her personal secretaries as they were bombarded with requests. In September 1948, Wilson wrote to her, "When the telephone rings these days, I become pale and start trembling; I am afraid that the Rockefeller Abydos Project has reached another crisis. The difficulty of trying to do emergency business at the last minute by telephone with bad connections seems to me bad business and dangerous. However, thus far the chief difficulty has been the $800 which we sent to you in New York. As far as we can find, the University of Chicago did an exceptional piece of work in trying to get that money to you within 24 hours instead of the normal four days."[19]

Calverley continued to annoy Chicago. She astounded Wilson and Oriental Institute director Jacobsen by arranging a private meeting with John D. Rockefeller Jr. in summer 1947, cheerfully reporting, "I had the good fortune to see Mr. Rockefeller while in New York & we had a long talk—he was exceedingly kind & so charming & interested in everything. I'm very glad that I saw him as now I shall feel that I can go ahead without the feeling of working against time. . . . I hope to return to Egypt very soon & to carry on till the job is finished—possibly in 2½ years."[20] It was probably this meeting that motivated a second gift to the project of $17,000.

The End of Fieldwork

In a brief letter written on July 31, 1947, Calverley mentioned her plan to buy a Kodak Cine Special movie camera to make a film at Abydos. The following year, she bought a Webster Electric Ekotape sound recorder. Her film project was to create incredible complications for her and the Oriental Institute. The film, titled *Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs and the Living Present*, examined "the Hieroglyphs and their relation to the living present"—and she immediately had trouble with the Egyptian authorities and censors.[21] She described the film to Wilson: "It shows promise of being something very worth while. It had a stormy start, with the Egyptian red-tape almost strangling it before it got started, but now, I think it is over that set of difficulties and can go ahead."[22] She was very wrong.

Calverley also started making more demands of the Oriental Institute in connection with the film, which Chicago clearly viewed as an unwelcome

(2 February 1937, ISAC Museum Archives). However, Greener (see fig. 7.5 in chapter 7 and fig. 12.46 in chapter 12) returned to Chicago House in 1958 and stayed for nine seasons.

* She commented that in 1956 and again in 1957, she paid herself only three months' salary (Calverley to Kraeling, 1 January 1958, ISAC Museum Archives).

distraction from the work on the Abydos volumes. In May 1947, she sent a long letter to Wilson asking him to ask the Oriental Institute director (Jacobsen, whose name she said she could not remember) to contact the United States consul in Cairo to issue her "a priority visa" so she could work in America over the summer. She said that she thought she could finish the job on the Rockefeller grant, but she was "done out of three months of the season" due to "official hold-ups," and she would have to do the project "single handed" because an untrained assistant was of no help. She segued into asking for help with her film (advice on technical points such as photography, continuity, and length of shot, as well as on the "sound record"). She was far more enthusiastic about the film than about publishing reliefs at Abydos:

> I could see the Egyptian censor in New York and find out from him what to avoid so as to save waste and cutting. Then, knowing what material remains after the censor has done his cuts and the unsatisfactory bits have been deleted, I should be able to see how much is left with which to make the film, and, if the surviving material is of such quality as to have one of the big film companies having an interest in it (I have the "World Today," and educational M-G-M, both interested and might hitch up with one or the other). I have taken some 3000 feet to date and 200 stills.[23]

Wilson had concerns about the film's content, especially since Egypt was unsettled as a result of the November 1947 United Nations resolution to partition Palestine. Anti-British and anti-American riots had broken out, and the Egyptians were sensitive to anything that could be taken as denigrating their country and culture. Visas were hard for the British to obtain, and all visitors, regardless of nationality, had to register with the police. In September 1948, Wilson wrote to Calverley, "In the Egyptian state of mind of today, it is important to get from him [the Egyptian consul] a full and final approval of the film you have already taken, so that there may be no question about future work."[24]

In December 1948, Calverley's permission to work at Abydos was revoked by the Egyptian Ministry of Education because it objected to the content of her film. Because the Abydos project was sponsored by the Oriental Institute, Chicago was dragged into the controversy. Wilson contacted the US Embassy in Cairo, but he advised Calverley that the film was her own "hobby," that her Chicago connection was related to the Abydos copying project, and that the film should not be permitted to interfere with the scientific work. She wrote to Oriental Institute director Jacobsen:

> I am to discontinue working on the Survey of the Temple, instructions having been given the Temple guards to stop me should I continue drawing etc. in the Temple. The exact reasons for this action I am not aware of as the only intimation I have received is by a letter written in Arabic, which I did not fully understand on my servant's trying to read it for me. . . . I gather the cause behind this lies in the difficulties recently raised in the subject-matter of the cine-films I took during the past 2 seasons; which as I understand, Abd el Salam Hussein Bey mentioned when he was in Chicago.[25]

Although a Canadian citizen, Calverley reached out as an employee of the University of Chicago to the US Embassy, apparently without consulting Wilson: "I have brought the matter to the attention of the American Embassy and asked their help in the matter, and have told all I know of what has led to this hold-up to Bob Martindale, who is now in charge of Public Relations in the Embassy and he is advising me on the course I should take."[26] Calverley ascribed the campaign against her to an "enemy," to which Wilson responded, "I do not believe that the chief factor is the intriguing of any one person, but is the general atmosphere of a country engaged in a difficult war. That is to say, it was never clear and unequivocal that your films of last year were definitely approved and released for showing. . . . In other words, we are dealing with a hostile and suspicious atmosphere, and not with the overt action of any one person."[27]

Although Wilson and others in Chicago had seen the films* and "felt them to be of scientific value and not damaging to the reputation of Egypt," he advised "that both the films and the film project should be given up if that be the only way to continue the Abydos copying." Wilson also told Calverley that the Oriental Institute had been in touch with Rockefeller and informed him that "we had a friendly interest, but we did not see that we were in any way equipped to participate in this activity." Wilson also contacted Dr. W. Wendell Cleland† at the US Department of State, "asking him to stand ready to function in any way which may be helpful."[28]

Calverley spent December 1948 and early January 1949 in Cairo, calling on anyone who she thought might get her exile from the temple reversed. She made arrangements for the director of the Egyptian Education Bureau in Washington, DC, to review the film and for him to request a screening by the Ministry of Education in Cairo. But then she announced she was going to Crete to make three more documentary films. Hughes knew that Homer Thompson, the head of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, had told her he had no budget to support the project and would not even be in town when she was, but "she chose to believe he did not understand and would be quite willing to go ahead after she had begun work and he finally arrived."[29]

Hughes further reported to Wilson, "She not only gave me the impression but buttressed it in almost flat statements that the Abydos Project was now mine. She thought [Tim] Healey and I should move everything in the camp to Chicago House. . . . She told me that after twenty years it was time someone else worried about it." He wrote of "her rather obvious desire to get out from under the load of finishing the copying of Abydos," and "she seems to have much greater interest now in the series of educational films than in Abydos." However, Hughes expressed sympathy for her situation, noting that she had worked hard on the project and could not be expected to finish it by herself, especially since it was down to the "dregs"—the faint, painted decoration in the Hall of Barks and "Slaughterhouse" and sections recut by Ramesses II. Yet he felt that the ban from the site was the result of her "own bad judgement." Wilson communicated to Hughes the unhappy result—"Yes, you have the Abydos Project, lock and stock"—and they strategized how to get an assistant who might rekindle Calverley's interest in the project (assuming she was allowed on the site again).[30] But Calverley was "unrepentant" and continued to blame the ban on an enemy‡ rather than on the content of the film.

In February 1949, Wilson made an "urgent request that she come to Chicago House and work on the unfinished drawings, which will take her years by her own estimate," but "she raised objections which seem final to her but not to me."[31] A few days later, Wilson outlined the options: (1) ask that the film be viewed and approved; (2) ask her to "surrender all her films as the price of her reinstatement"; (3) reinstate her, but inform her that she would be "subject to immediate and definite supervision, that is, . . . nominally and actually under the direction of somebody else" (Wilson preferred someone from the EES, reassuring Hughes, "Certainly I should not lay such a responsibility upon you . . . without your consent"); (4) turn the project over to the Epigraphic Survey, which would work at Abydos two or three weeks each season; or, finally, (5) "give up the project as essentially completed."[32]

Although Calverley told Hughes and Wilson that she would resume work on the Abydos publications (*Abydos* IV and V) after she left Greece,

* The only Calverley film named is *Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs and the Living Present*, but Wilson refers to "films" and there is a reference to Calverley "hoping to make 3 really fascinating pictures" in Greece (Hughes to Wilson, 4 April 1949, ISAC Museum Archives).

† Cleland was one of the founders of the American University in Cairo.

‡ Identified as Abd es-Salam in a marginal note on a letter from Wilson to Hughes, 4 April 1949, ISAC Museum Archives.

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she was certain she would not be reinstated at Abydos because of her "enemy." The accused, Abd es-Salam, visited Chicago House in April 1949, and Hughes found him to be a reasonable man who recounted the whole chain of events and claimed that he was caught in the middle between Calverley and a superior in the government, and that he had tried "everything with Miss C. to fix up matters," to no avail. He also said that he had received a copy of the reports from the viewing at the Egyptian Education Bureau in Washington, DC, and "he . . . had never seen a more adverse one. The films were outrageously prejudicial." He suggested that someone else finish the Abydos project.[33]

By April 1949, Hughes was trying to find a path forward at Abydos. That November, Calverley asked to meet with Wilson to discuss the project. Wilson told her of "the rumor from Gardiner that all has been forgiven with regard to her film." But he commented, "Sounds to me less likely than the rumor from Apted* that the Government would buy up the film to prevent its use. It is not quite the same Government with whom she had her trouble, but the Undersecretaries of Education and Interior remain the same and I should not expect them to reverse themselves. I proposed to tell her that if she wants to return to Abydos, the cost may be the surrender of her film, and that if she is unwilling to face that possibility, she will probably never return."[34] Calverley chose her film over Abydos, and in December 1949, she submitted her resignation as field director of the Abydos project; however, she continued to do editorial work on *Abydos* IV and V from afar.[35]

In April 1949, Hughes in Luxor started wrapping up the loose ends of the Abydos Expedition in Egypt. Funds for the project in Egyptian banks were transferred to the Epigraphic Survey's bank in Luxor, and "terminal baksheesh" was paid to Calverley's three workmen (*reis* Sadiq Abdullah, Sardek Ahmed Abd es-Salam, and Seman Tulebh). The Survey offered the services of Charles Nims to finish the photography in the rooms near the King List. Hughes also had to decide what to do with Calverley's ladders, scaffolds, and Chevy truck,† all of which belonged to the EES.

Calverley continued to work on *Abydos* IV and V from Canada and the United Kingdom, paying a Dutch draftsman, Peter Daman, to assist her. In 1954, again, she went over the head of Oriental Institute director Kraeling and Hughes and appealed directly to John D. Rockefeller Jr. As Kraeling wrote that year, "Miss Calverley has been weeping on our friend's shoulder again and . . . he got himself inveigled by her into all kinds of new arrangements for her benefit without giving me full information."‡ Kraeling tried to turn this situation to his own advantage:

> So I finally decided that if weeping on people's shoulders worked such wonders, maybe I ought to use some of the same medicine. So I wrote our friend telling him that much as we love to take [care] of things for him, we could not anymore serve him as fully as we ought because we were ourselves in such a deplorably understaffed condition. The result has been that our friend's assistant a Mr. Creel says he is coming out to visit us, which I think means our friend has given him a commission to report. Boy, will we act poor for our friend's benefit.[36]

It probably did not endear Calverley to Wilson and Nelson when she wrote, three years later, "It is indeed a worry for you to have to close the OI in

* Michael Ross Apted was an epigrapher, artist, and photographer who collaborated with A. M. Blackman on *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, parts 5 and 6 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1953). He is shown in a 1952 group photograph in Luxor (see fig. 12.55 in chapter 12).

† The member of Parliament in Balyana, Fikry Boulos, with whom the truck had been left, bought it himself for £E200 for use in his cane fields.

‡ In 1956, Calverley obtained $1,000 for "her expenses in connection with Abydos IV," and a further $35,000 for expenses in connection with *Abydos* V (Calverley to Kraeling, 19 January 1958, ISAC Museum Archives; Kraeling to Calverley, 4 February 1958, ISAC Museum Archives).

Luxor—It would seem to one that if it were possible it is of the very greatest value that it should continue—for such contacts are of incalculable value as a stabilizer in this time of transition, a quiet and unpolitical project working as evidence of sanity and good intent can do so much more than political handouts and gambits—DO hold on if it is remotely possible," as if they needed her advice on such an action.[37] Kraeling responded, "What I said about Luxor in my last was not intended to imply abandonment of the establishment, but only suspension of the epigraphic work due to a lack of artists. We hope to be able to maintain the base and do other things there, until conditions improve."[38]

As *Abydos* IV was being readied for press, Calverley reported having trouble with her editor, Gardiner. He was delayed in finishing the introduction and they had differences of opinion over the plate captions, specifically whether the gods shown should be identified by name (Calverley said yes; he, not necessarily). She expressed to Kraeling her concern that if she pushed too hard on Gardiner (who served as editor without remuneration[39]), he would resign from the project,[40] and she thought it would be "grievous" to "break the continuity they had achieved with the previous three volumes." Margaret Drower of the EES, who was proofreading the volume, acted as an intermediary and persuaded Gardiner to finish the work on *Abydos* IV.[41]

For *Abydos* V, Calverley brought H. Walter Fairman of the University of Liverpool into the project as editor.[42] In September 1958, Calverley had hoped that Fairman might go to Abydos to "collate and complete what is necessary for Vol. V," but he was unable to leave his university post, so she made arrangements for Ricardo Caminos to collate the drawings for the volume. This development may have not been the best of news to the Oriental Institute because, in 1957 and 1958, its publications office was in an acrimonious dispute with Caminos over his manuscript for the Bubastite Portal (see "Publication of the Bubastite Portal" in chapter 5). Calverley requested,

> I shall be most grateful if you will arrange for him [Caminos] to have access to all the Abydos material, and let him have the use of any equipment, etc., that is needed, both for the Abydos needs and for the other work on which he is engaged during his sabbatical year.* He will, of course, return everything to Chicago House prior to his leaving Egypt at the conclusion of his work. He has also offered to bring back such personal possessions as he deems I would wish to have here—the Onomastica for one—so please let him go through any of the boxes, crates, as remain. . . . I have also asked him to go through any of the negatives of Vols. V, VI and VII which should be in Chicago House.[43]

In September, Caminos was on his way to Abydos, where he would start the collations for *Abydos* V. A month later, Calverley reported to Wilson that Caminos was returning to Europe—"So, all being well, Abydos V should be well and truly checked!" She further reported, "Volume V is progressing steadily and I hope to take the greater part of the plates to the Press in the Spring."[44]

The next few years saw numerous exchanges between Calverley and the Oriental Institute about the transfer of money to her account and inquiries about the progress on *Abydos* V. Finances continued to be a problem, with Calverley persistently asking for nonitemized lump sums rather than receiving monthly payments for specific supplies and services.[45] There were further letters about photographs and drawings that she insisted were at Chicago House; Hughes and Healey packed a batch of large-format photos and sent them to her, yet she kept claiming that there were more.[46] Chicago House continued to assist the Abydos project, and

* Caminos was also working on the texts at Gebel es-Silsila for the EES.

Hughes opined, "We ought to help in every way we can for the sake of a worthy job." In perhaps 1957, Nims made prints of the Abydos negatives stored at Chicago House to send to Gardiner, and then, in 1959, he offered to send the negatives themselves to Fairman for his work on *Abydos* V.[47]

On April 10, 1959, Amice Mary Calverley passed away in her home in Oakville, Ontario, after a brief illness. Her death left many unresolved issues with the Abydos publications, the most important being—from the Oriental Institute's perspective—recovering the photos, negatives, and drawings she may have had; ensuring that they were transferred to Chicago or the EES; and moving any remaining funds back to the Oriental Institute. Condolences were sent to her brother, Colonel Hugh Calverley, and his wife, with a request that "no disposition of the drawings and scholarly materials should be made without consultation with us."[48] An often-bitter series of letters followed while the accounts got straightened out as they traced money that Calverley had transferred from the trust account to her own accounts.* In late April, Hughes drove to Oakville and collected research materials that the family released. But in October, after Fairman was able to inventory the material, they found "many gaps" that would need to be filled with new photography and drawings. Eventually, they found that Caminos had the "missing" material.

The Abydos Publications

In 1933, Breasted forecast that the publication of the temple would require "at least" eight folios, with a series of smaller-format publications for the descriptive text.[49] Volumes I–IV of *The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos* were published between 1933 and 1958. In 1958, there are references to a plan for seven folios.[50]

The first four volumes were funded by the original gift from Rockefeller, while *Abydos* V was underwritten by a separate gift of $17,000 from Rockefeller after World War II that Calverley interpreted as being a gift to her "as a person" for the project, although the funds were to be administered by the Oriental Institute.[51] At the time of Calverley's death in 1959, *Abydos* V, on the Hall of Barks, was still being prepared. She was working on the text, and Caminos returned from the field in late 1959 with the collations. The photography for the other volumes was done, for on September 11, 1958, Calverley wrote to Caminos inquiring about the negatives for *Abydos* V, VI, and VII, which she assumed were at Chicago House.

* She apparently did so to avoid losses because of the fluctuating exchange rate (Hughes to Kraeling, 1 November 1959, ISAC Museum Archives).

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11 Old Chicago House, 1924–1940

Early on, James Henry Breasted recognized that the staff of his Epigraphic Survey needed a secure and comfortable base camp. He recalled in his memoir, "The Institute must possess headquarters on the Nile which would give it a more substantial base than a mere gallery in the Cairo Museum devoted to epigraphic copying."[1] Further, the University of Chicago already had experience building substantial field headquarters for its expedition at Bismaya, Iraq, where in 1903 it had constructed a substantial mudbrick expedition house within a fortified enclosure lined with battlements, complete with a darkroom, dining room, servants' and soldiers' rooms, and a "museum" in which the finds were stored (fig. 11.1).[2] Breasted had an even grander vision, inspired by the French Institute in Cairo. He admired its "suite of library rooms" and "living and study rooms for six students," continuing, "I cannot but give my imagination free rein as I dream of what might be done with such an institution with a little vision and practical ability at the head of it. Why should not our country have a place like this here? If I should spend the next few years devoting all my time and energy to this end, I suppose it could be done."[3]

Small Chicago House, 1924

There were several versions of Chicago House. Regardless of the iteration, so closely was the structure associated with the Epigraphic Survey that the Survey itself is commonly referred to as "Chicago House."

The house started off small and grew only as the mission grew in scope and additional staff were added. An important factor in its design was that the staff would be in residence for six months of the year—much longer than other expeditions, which spent weeks or perhaps a month in the field. In January 1924, when Breasted offered Harold Nelson the field director position in Luxor, he promised him "a comfortable house with rooms for you and your family, and the draughtsman and photographer. . . . It would also include office, work rooms, and dark room, etc."[4] He later wrote (in the third person), "Since the Institute possessed no architect, the Director [Breasted] drew the plans for the field house

Chicago House behind the Colossi of Memnon, ca. 1927. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

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Figure 11.1. University of Chicago excavation headquarters at Bismaya, Iraq, 1901. The guard house is to the right. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

himself. These he handed with full instructions to Mr. A. R. Callender" (fig. 11.2).*

The first step was acquiring land and obtaining permission from the Antiquities Service to build. Doing so was very complicated. Because the focus of the epigraphic work was Medinet Habu, a site in Gourna not far from the temple was desired. Callender scouted areas near the temple and found several plots for consideration. Two options, one to the north, the other to the south, were presented to Pierre Lacau, the head of the Service.[5] In early May 1924, Breasted wrote to Nelson, "I have a letter from Engelbach† stating that Lacau has consented to the erection of our house on the southern site of the uppermost sites marked by Callender."[6] According to Callender, this option was the better one. Breasted was satisfied, writing, "Lacau has therefore consented to the preferable site. I take it, therefore, that everything is going forward at Luxor exactly as we had planned and hoped."[7]

But in fact, the matter of the location of the house was not settled, and in June, Nelson reported to Breasted that Callender had written, "telling me that the site for the house which we thought had been arranged for before we left Egypt, has been changed and a different site purchased from private owners. I am very much interested in this news, though it would have been more interesting if Callender had told me where the new site is. I hope it is not down by the edge of the cultivation along with the snakes and the scorpions. If it is, Mrs. Nelson, who has had several very unpleasant experiences with deadly snakes in this part of the world, will not enjoy Egypt very much."[8]

* Breasted, *Oriental Institute*, 69–70. Arthur (Pecky) Callender was an architect and engineer who initially came to Egypt to work on the railways, then moved into archaeological engineering. He is best known for being a member of Howard Carter's team that cleared the tomb of Tutankhamun.

† Reginald Engelbach, then director ("keeper") of the Egyptian Museum.

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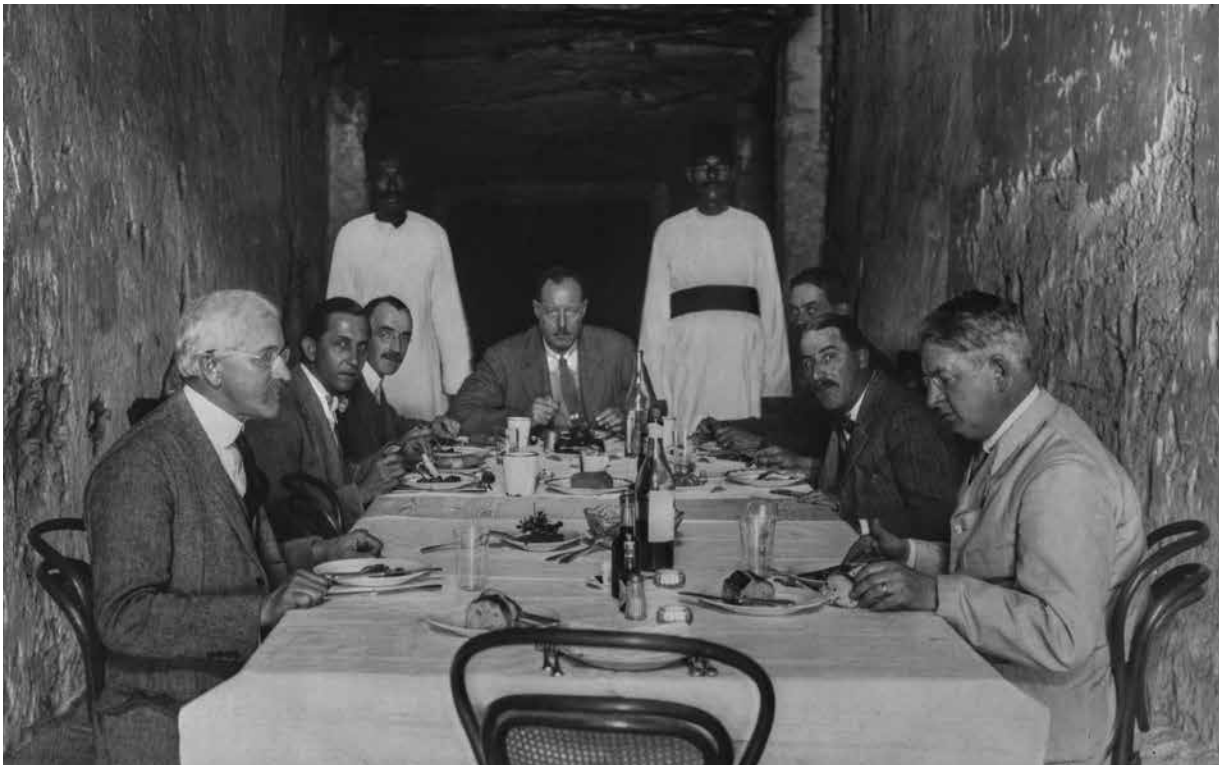

Figure 11.2. Arthur Callender (at head of table), who was to play an important role in the construction of Chicago House, flanked by two unidentified Egyptians. Seated, clockwise from left: James H. Breasted, Harry Burton, Alfred Lucas, Callender, Arthur Mace, Howard Carter, and Alan Gardiner. Taken in the tomb of Ramesses XI during the clearance of the tomb of Tutankhamun, probably mid-February 1923. Photo: Lord Carnarvon, © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford.

The location was changed because the first proposed site was on government land, a situation that Breasted recognized would give the University of Chicago no future security. He reported to Nelson:

> You will be interested to know that the permit to build on eminent domain land, sent me by Lacau, was so grotesquely impossible, that I did not think it wise to invest Oriental Institute funds in a building over which we would have very slight control; which might be taken from us at any moment, and which, in any case, would be the property of the government at the end of a year if they saw fit to terminate our work. We have, therefore, bought a *feddan** of land just north of the Colossi, and the house is being erected on our own territory. The government will be unable to interfere with you in any way, and as far as your living quarters are concerned, you will be free from any annoyance at the hands of Mon. Lacau.[9]

On July 17, Breasted informed Lacau of the decision to purchase rather than lease from the Egyptian government.[10]

But that site was not the final one. On June 30, 1924, the purchase of a tract of land from Sheikh Khalil (who was to figure in later land negotiations), and another from Ali Chimi (also spelled Shimi) Mohammed, was registered. A third parcel was acquired from Khalil Ibrahim Mohammed Tayi' on April 29, 1924, and construction could begin.[11] The site was farther to the west than the original site, near the back of the Amenhotep III temple, about halfway between Medinet Habu and the Ramesseum.

* Measurement of land area, equal to 4,200 square meters or 1.037 acres.

The news that Chicago was planning to establish its headquarters spread in the area. Nelson mentioned to Breasted, "Some friends of mine who were in Luxor last week said the guide pointed out to them the location of the 'Chicago House,' though there was no sign of building there as yet. Apparently the name of the place is already known."[12]

In August, Nelson was able to report:

> The house stands half on the cultivation and half on the desert, surrounded on the back and at the two ends by government property, and only at the front touching on private property. As it is quite possible for neighbors to make it very unpleasant for us, this fact regarding the ownership of adjacent land is important. The new location of the house will have one advantage over the original site in that we shall have our own well with water running to the bath rooms and the dark room. We shall have a pleasant prospect from the front porch looking right across the valley with the two Amenhotep III statues right in front of us. The house is about half way between the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu and so will be more convenient for the future work of the expedition. Although I would have preferred the original site; still, from the point of view of the expedition, I believe the new site will be an improvement. It will also probably be somewhat freer from visitors. Callender is certainly doing a good piece of work for us. . . . The delays in securing the land have postponed the completion of the house, so that Callender is inclined to think it will not be ready before the end of October. I have agreed to take over the place as soon as it is ready so he can get away for a short time before the winter. He will telegraph me in a couple of weeks in advance, so that I shall have time to arrange everything before I take over the house.[13]

Although Breasted made the initial plan for the house, it was modified by Callender, who was also in charge of the construction. Nelson wrote to Breasted in August, "You were very fortunate in being able to secure him to undertake the building. It looks to me as if the construction will be entirely satisfactory. Callender is taking every precaution to make the building strong, though how he is going to make the walls carry the thrust of the large dome over the sitting-room, I do not see."[14]

Construction was finished in summer 1924. In October, the expedition moved in, and on November 18, Nelson cabled three words to Breasted: "Work began yesterday." A "grand house warming" was planned for January 1925 when Breasted visited Luxor.[15]

This first Chicago House was a single-story structure built of unfired mudbrick (fig. 11.3). It had six bedrooms to the north of the public rooms, two water closets,* two baths, a domed sitting room, a dining room, kitchen and service areas, and a darkroom also topped with a dome (fig. 11.4). The sitting room had arched doorways, equipped with curtains (fig. 11.5). According to John Wilson's memoirs, "Legend said that when the old house was built the contractor had been too stingy to make a sacrifice to the *jinn* of that particular piece of land. When the dome reached a certain height the walls would not support the weight of a man. A boy was detailed to lay the bricks as they centered for the final arch. He fell off and was killed. The workmen then deserted the job. The contractor had to kill two sheep at the threshold to appease the jealous *jinn* before the workmen would return to the job."[16]

Breasted was consumed with the details of furnishing the house, and few issues were not cleared by him, or at least reported to him. In Luxor, Nelson's wife, Libbie, was in charge of budgets for furnishing the house, a skill she had apparently acquired during her years at the American University of

* Irene Nelson recalled, "For a long time, we had a room with buckets. This was the bathroom facility. There was a substance, probably lime, that you spread over the bucket. In the evening a boy came with a donkey cart, loaded up the buckets and took them way out into the desert to dump them" (from I. Nelson Leinberger, "My Life in Syria and Egypt, 1921–1935," unpublished memoir courtesy of Beth Weideman).

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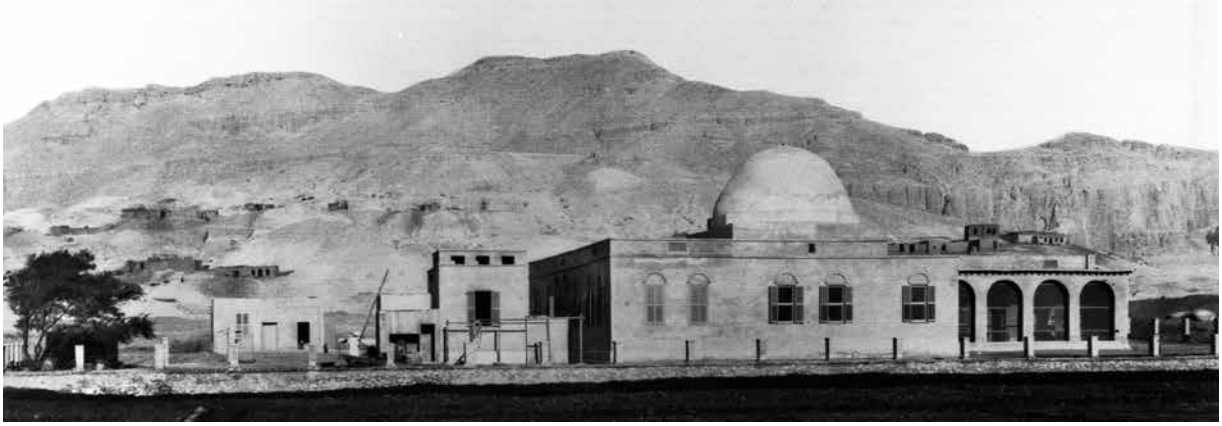

Figure 11.3. Chicago House, east facade, 1925. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Beirut (AUB). Breasted instructed her (via her husband) to "sit down with the ground plan of the house and estimate the cost of the furniture, putting it safely high and letting me have the maximum total. This estimate should include the building and furnishing of the whole house; let's say, furnishing four of the bedrooms with two single beds each and two of them with only one each, and including a couple of comfortable cots to be put in storage and used only when necessary." One of the original line items was for a Ford van because Breasted felt that "I very much want you to have the convenience and it is obviously necessary to your full efficiency."[17]

In late April, Nelson reported, "I wrote Callender after I returned to Beirut regarding the shelves, etc. for the house. I also asked him to have his carpenters make a number of tables for kitchen, pantry and bedrooms. I concluded it would be cheaper to have them made when the woodwork for the building was being prepared than it would be to have them made separately. Local carpenters at Luxor ought to do that kind of work satisfactorily enough." He continued:

> I shall go to Cairo, probably in July, to see about ordering furniture for the Luxor house. I have arranged with a friend on the Faculty of the American University of Cairo, who will be in Cairo part of the summer, to meet him there. He will go with me to see the individual who makes furniture for them at the University. In that way I shall probably be able to get better prices than if I went at it alone. I shall probably also engage a cook, etc. through him when the time comes. If I do not make use of my friend in this matter, I shall use one of our alumni. They always come in handy.[18]

The many letters between Nelson and Breasted about the furnishings for the small house show that no detail was too small to be cleared with Breasted. For instance, in June 1924, Nelson wrote:

> Since the parlor is not going to be octagonal, we thought that a set of wicker furniture with some sort of blue cretonne upholstery would be suitable and would be different from anything now at Luxor. This would have to be imported from England, as good stuff of that kind cannot be secured in Cairo. I am writing to Harrod's in London for catalogues and prices. Even if the stuff is not on hand at the opening of the season, we could well afford to wait a while for it and have it right, rather than take anything that would be less desirable. Good wicker furniture, not the ordinary stuff, is comfortable and cool and ought to be appropriate. On the other hand it is not cheap, as you know. I think, however, that we ought to be able to secure what we need in London for $200. . . . If you could let us know what your reaction to this particular suggestion is, I would be very glad as I am a little worried about the

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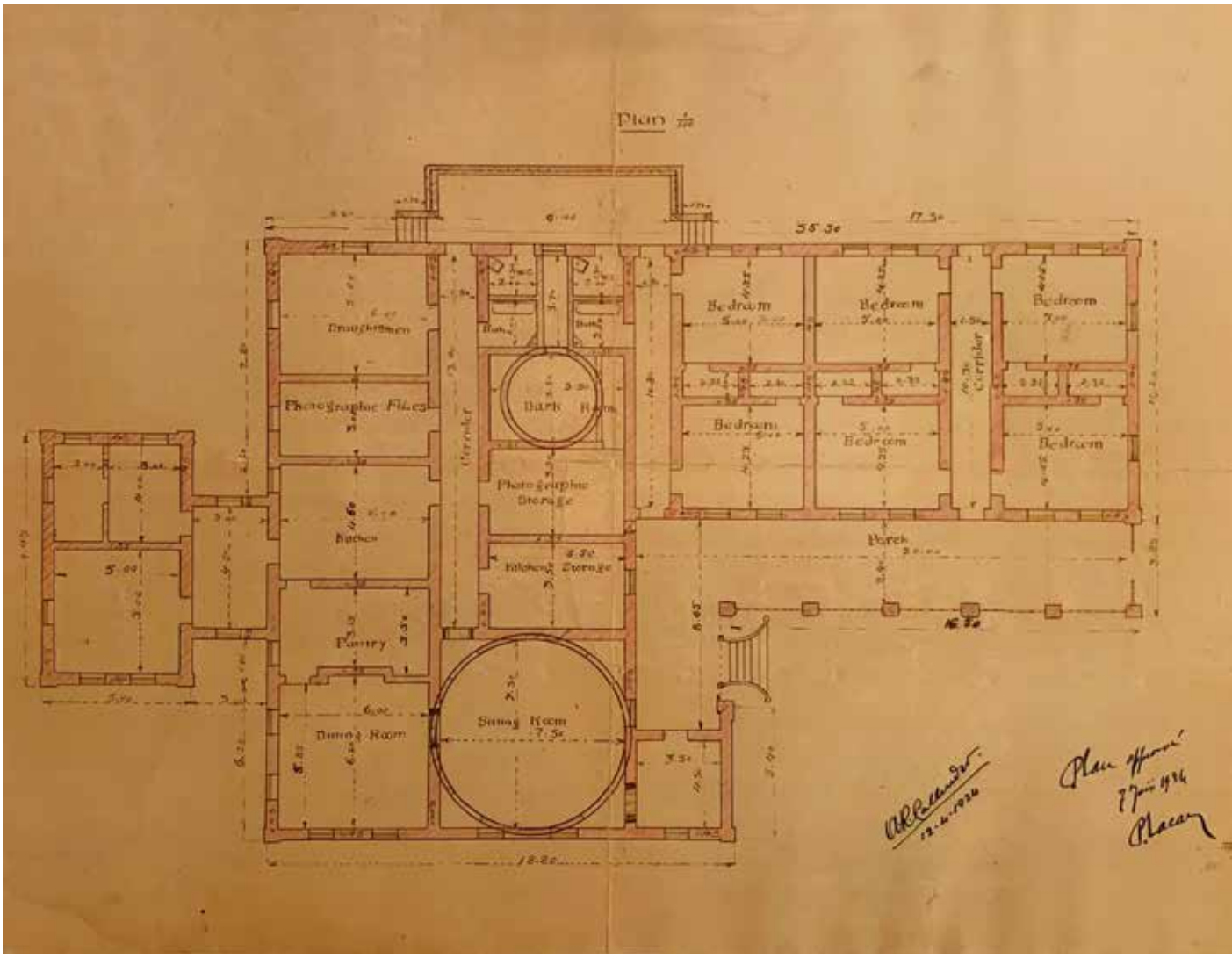

Figure 11.4. Plan and elevation of Chicago House by Arthur Callender, signed and dated April 12, 1924, and approved by Pierre Lacau on June 7, 1924. Collection of A. Marks.

> item of the parlor furniture, that it may not suit your ideas of what ought to be in that environment.[19]

Even from far-off Chicago, Breasted instructed:

> In the matter of furniture: The sitting room should by all means be furnished substantially, avoiding, as you suggest, any indication of showiness or luxury. Without doubt there will be many people among American friends of the University who will visit us in this room. The wicker furniture which you suggest is very appropriate. It will be necessary, however, to make certain that it is very substantially built, otherwise it will not stand the hard usage it is likely to receive. If I remember right, the style of furniture in the New York house [the excavation house of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in western Thebes] is simple and massive like our mission furniture. If that kind of thing is obtainable, it would probably be more durable than the wicker, but I quite agree to the wicker if it is substantially built. . . . Please note that we will buy the table silverware for the dining

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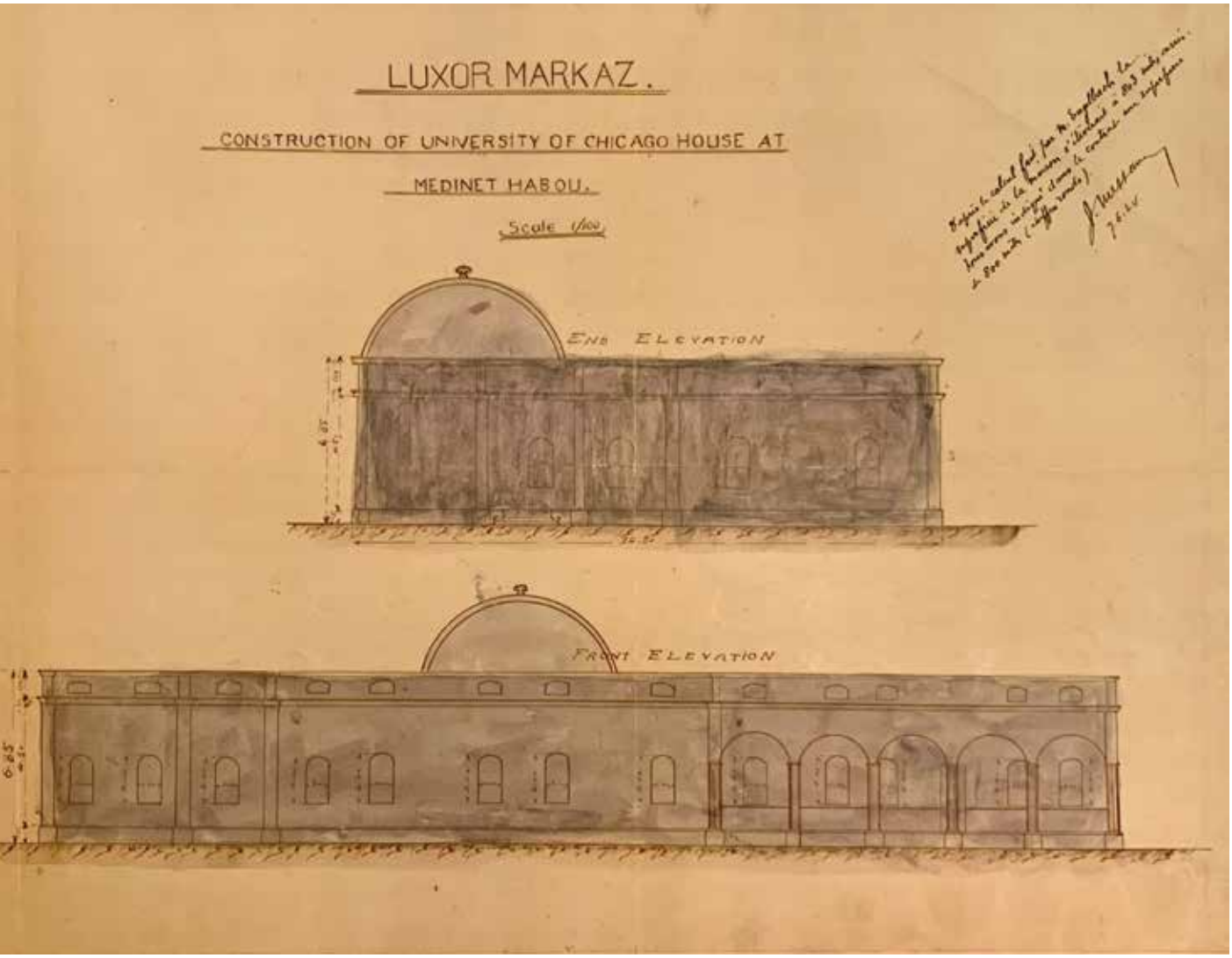

room and send it to you. The memorandum of purchase and shipment will be sent to you.[20]

By August 1924, Breasted reported:

> I have ordered the living-room furniture and the table silver, in accordance with your cablegram stating that you had not bought and requesting me to do so. Both lots will leave New York on an all water ocean shipment, September 10th and should reach Alexandria three weeks later. Besides liberal furnishing for the sitting-room, I have included also four desks for the bedrooms with a chair for each desk and a sewing rocker for Mrs. Nelson. I also bought some porch furniture. That is, a settee, porch table and rockers. All this furniture is of the new type known as Kaltex [fig. 11.5]. It is a heavy, steel wire, covered with paper fiber of the toughest texture and in appearance is exactly like rattan or wicker furniture.*

* Breasted to Nelson, 28 August 1924, ISAC Museum Archives. The Kaltex furniture is so durable that some of it is still used in the current Chicago House.

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Figure 11.5. The sitting room with its domed ceiling, ca. 1925. The entrance to the dining room is in the background. The room is furnished with "Kaltex" sofas, chairs, and tables that imitate wicker. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

The overall effect, as Nelson described to Breasted, was pleasing:

> The house is indeed fine, though it is even bigger than we realized after our visit of the summer. . . . The sitting room with the dome is rather imposing and will be something of a problem to furnish properly. We have the furniture and the rugs, but the question of the hangings remains. However, I shall write you about that later. Callender has put in tile floors throughout the house, even on the front porch, and though they cost a little more now, they are really delightful and I am sure you will approve of them when you see them. The tiles are all red and go very well with the buff walls. The paint is also harmonious with the other colors.[21]

The few images of the early house show wooden dining chairs surrounding a long dining table draped in a white cloth (fig. 11.6). Bedouin rugs covered some of the tiled floors. A wide, screened-in porch ran along the east and southeast sides of the building.[22] In spite of the care taken with the construction and furnishing, in later years Irene Nelson recalled the house less glowingly as "always being damp from the Nile," and "our bedposts sat in cans of kerosene to keep the bugs from crawling into our beds.* Books and papers could not be stored in this house, because of the

* The use of kerosene cans under the legs of the kitchen preparation tables persisted well into the 1990s, as recalled by Peter and Kathy Dorman.

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Figure 11.6. The dining room at Chicago House, Christmas 1926. Left to right: Phoebe Byles (partially shown), Irene Nelson, Miss Thornley (guest), William and Jean Edgerton, Harold Nelson (at head of table), Augusta and Alfred Bollacher, Ella Ransom (Caroline Ransom Williams's mother), and Louise Fitz-Randolph (Ransom Williams's aunt). Photo: C. Ransom Williams, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

dampness. We kept our linens in zinc trunks to protect them from bugs and mildew."[23]

As nice as the house was, Breasted and Nelson could see that it would soon be inadequate. Breasted was especially concerned about the number of bedrooms, which limited the number of staff members who could be accommodated, and the lack of a library.[24] A plan, perhaps drawn by Virgilio Canziani in March 1926 (fig. 11.7), reflects an early and economical solution of building an 11-square-meter addition to the southwest to accommodate both a small library and additional sleeping rooms.

The Expansion of Chicago House, 1926–1927

The year 1926 was transformational for Chicago House. The idea of adding a few rooms to the existing house morphed into a major construction project that added not just more rooms to the residence but also an entirely new administrative building and library to the west, more than quadrupling the floor space (fig. 11.8). This expansion was motivated by the need for a research library, additional rooms for the rapidly expanding staff of the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys (see chapter 4, "Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926–1936"), and especially a dedicated drafting room for the artists, since the current one had poor light. Nelson reported to Breasted:

> [Artist Alfred] Bollacher says he absolutely cannot work in it. He has been on the front porch all the season. That arrangement, however, is not desirable and will be less so if we have several families here. In the first place Bollacher in the warm weather works there in his undershirt, a very thin affair of the fish-net variety and a little out of keeping with the sitting room for the ladies and visitors. Also his presence there puts a little restraint on conversation, as one instinctively does not wish to disturb him at his work. Also when the wind blows the ink dries so rapidly on his pen that he has difficulty in working at all and the dust is also hard on the photographs.[25]

This ambitious expansion of Chicago House arose from Breasted's success in articulating his vision to two very influential men from philanthropic institutions that had already generously funded University of Chicago projects. Foremost in enabling the expansion was Julius Rosenwald, a trustee of the university and a member of the General Education Board in New York City, which disbursed funds from the Rockefeller family. It was the General Education Board that had funded the foundation of the Oriental Institute in 1919. Breasted had discussed with Rosenwald "the need for enlarging our living quarters to accommodate new appointees on the staff," also emphasizing how the lack of a library limited research and characterizing the staff as being "scientifically marooned" without access to reference works.[26] Late in February 1926, Rosenwald visited Luxor, where the case for the importance and urgency of the work

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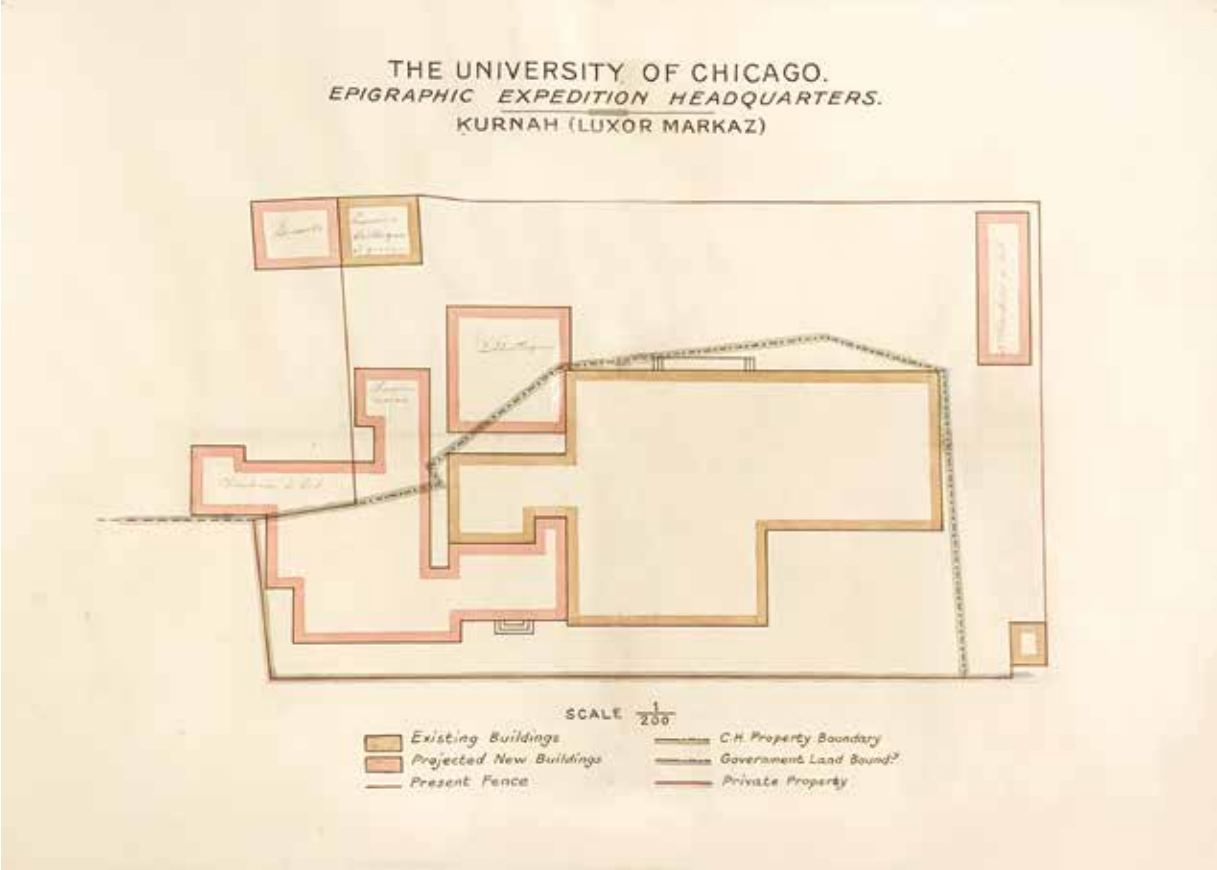

Figure 11.7. Preliminary plan for the expansion of Chicago House, adding more bedrooms and a small library to the existing building, probably by Canziani, March 1926. Image: Marks Collection.

could be vividly illustrated against the backdrop of the temple of Medinet Habu and the imposing Theban cliffs. A few months later, Breasted spent a day with Rosenwald at his home in Ravinia in the Chicago area. He recalled to Nelson, "While we were going about Mr. Rosenwald's beautiful place, he showed us a screened-in terrace with a fountain and flowers and idyllic look, and waving his hand . . . he said, 'That is what we will do for Chicago House some day.'"[27] And indeed he did. The library that was ceremonially opened on March 15, 1927, was named the Rosenwald Library, and the passage between the new and old buildings "Rosenwald Avenue" in his honor.[28]

The second benefactor was Abraham Flexner, also of the General Education Board. He visited Luxor in January 1926 and returned to America with a recommendation not only to purchase books for the Luxor facility but also to create an endowment for the "maintenance" of the Oriental Institute in Chicago totaling $200,000 (equivalent to $3.5 million in 2024).

The modest original house was expanded to the south (fig. 11.9). Two large photographic studios and a new residence wing with six additional bedrooms, two water closets and two baths,* a

* The water closets depended on both a drain field (about which there is much correspondence) and sand buckets. As Nelson reported to Breasted, "I am greatly puzzled what to do with the drainage and the contents of the sand buckets from the W.C.s. There is going to be a great deal of each to dispose of and the problem is serious. Perhaps Khalil will continue to allow us to use his inclosure, in which case, we are safe for a few years, until we have to begin redigging in the old holes.

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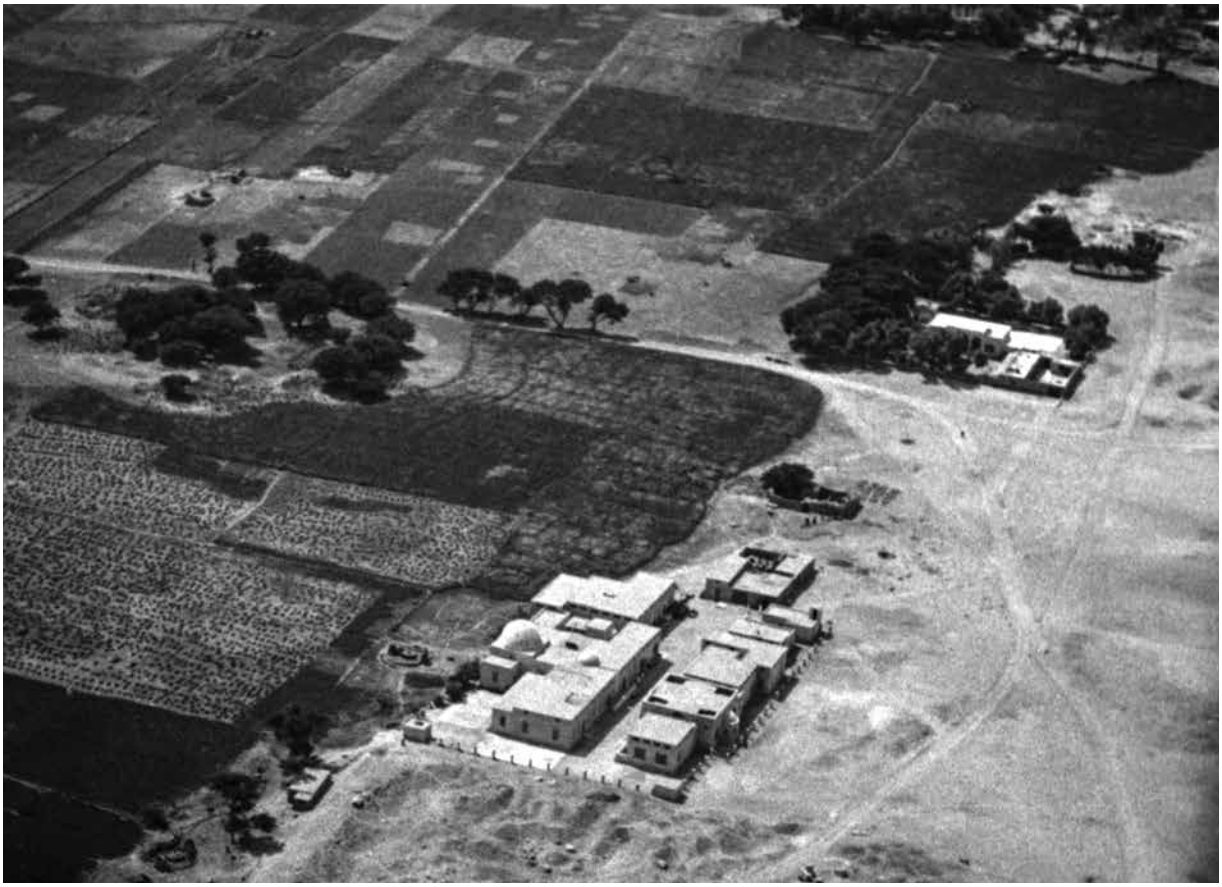

Figure 11.8. Aerial view of Chicago House after its expansion, 1932. The library building is to the right, the residence to the left. Photo: J. H. Breasted.

study, and a sitting room were added, along with a new electrical plant adjacent to the old kitchen.

The entirely new building to the west of the residence (fig. 11.10) housed the much-needed library, a large drafting room, two additional staff bedrooms, two administrative offices, two water closets, and three baths. A detached wing housed the "servants'" quarters, a washroom, a storeroom, the laundry, the hot water plant, and a garage. In total, the two buildings had fifteen bedrooms. The drafting room was a distinct improvement.* The old one was small (5 × 6 meters) and was located on the southwest side of the house, which did not give the artists adequate light to work. The new drafting room, located on the north side of the new building, had better light and was larger (6 × 8 meters).

All this expansion, achieved in 1926 and 1927, placed an incredible burden on Nelson, who suddenly was not only overseeing the scientific work but also acting as a general contractor. Members of his staff were drawn away from their own work

The water, of which there will be at least three cubic meters each day, not more, cannot be run out on the surface of the ground as it is at present. I am going to dig a cesspool near Khalil's inclusure, but the soil, *gebel* or black land, will not absorb the water fast enough" (Nelson to Breasted, 26 April 1926, ISAC Museum Archives).

* In the initial plan, the drafting room was to be located on the first floor (*1er étage*), but it was moved to the ground level because Lacau objected to the extra height and wished the building to be less conspicuous (30 March 1926, Marks Collection).

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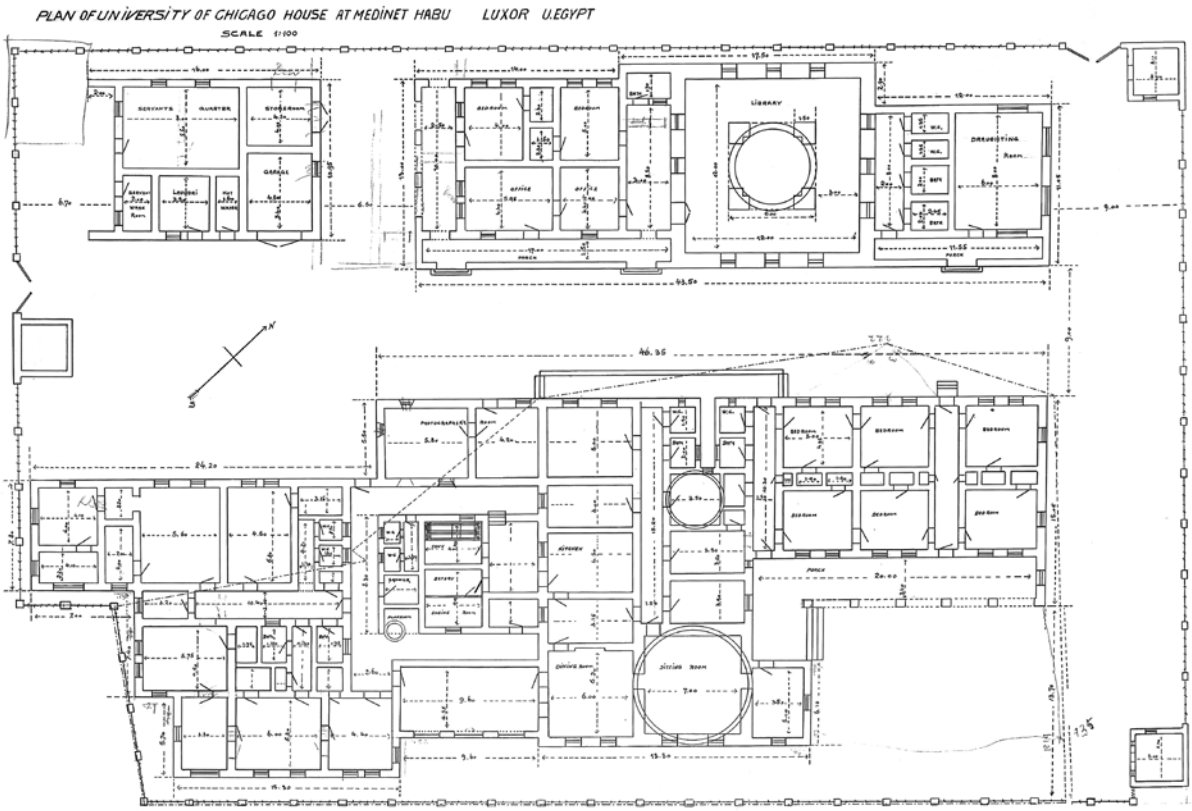

Figure 11.9. Plan of Chicago House after the expansion, 1927. Rosenwald Avenue separates the library and administrative building (top) from the residence (bottom). Image: Epigraphic Survey.

to help. Libbie Nelson was again put in charge of much of the budgeting, especially for finishings and furniture; Callender was again involved in the construction phase; and John Hartman, the Survey's first photographer, was appointed Nelson's "representative at Luxor" vis-à-vis the Service des Antiquités, taking on a whole range of responsibilities and acting as Nelson's second in many matters.[29]

No one person is credited as architect for the project, but as with the original house, Breasted was thoroughly involved. Correspondence between Nelson and Breasted refers to Nelson's having "made further changes in the plans from those we discussed at Cairo, which I think will greatly improve them."[30] Nelson mentioned his decision to break up the new library/office building into two sections separated by a passage and described the arrangement and placement of the new bedrooms. He wrote that he "turned over . . . the final drawing of the plans from my rough sketch" to artist Canziani, who joined the Survey in 1926 and who apparently turned them into building plans.[31] Among the many crucial roles Hartman played was negotiating for the additional land, securing building materials from Cairo, supervising the construction, and conferring with Nelson about the layout of the rooms. Nelson commented, "Hartman and I are holding the fort at Gurnah and trying to get the building work started satisfactorily. It is a rather complicated job," noting further that Hartman became so indispensable that "while he is absent, work on the house must stop."[32] As usual, Breasted stayed very involved, sending proposed changes to Nelson that the latter tactfully agreed to "fit . . . in in some way."[33]

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Figure 11.10. Chicago House after the expansion, looking southeast, 1927. The library is in front of the residence and has its original dome. Note the Colossi of Memnon in the left distance. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

The first and most essential step in the expansion of Chicago House was one of the most complicated: acquiring additional land. Some of the land adjacent to Chicago House was owned by the Egyptian government, and some was privately owned; some of the private property was rented to others, further complicating issues of use and acquisition. Negotiations dragged on through early 1926, with Nelson, Hartman, and Callender bargaining primarily with their neighbors Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim and Sheikh Abu el-Haggag for land for construction and for a greatly enlarged drain field. An additional complexity was that, as in 1924, the building project could not proceed without the permission of Antiquities Service head Lacau.

The expansion plans met with some opposition. James Quibell, working for the Antiquities Service, objected because the expansion would entail building on land owned by his agency, and he wanted to protect the area from further development. He insisted that if the project went ahead, the structure should be of mudbrick, to be more in character with its surroundings.[34]

Callender initially led the negotiations for private land, acting on instructions from Nelson and "additional instructions" from Chicago.[35] Meanwhile, Nelson was in communication with the government about acquiring its land.* But the private negotiations with Khalil and Abu el-Haggag got bogged down repeatedly, with rumors of third-party involvement (including that Callender was colluding with Abu el-Haggag and intended to take a 50 percent commission on the sale).† Talks also continued with Khalil, whom Callender advised not to sell land to Nelson even for the fair price of £E1,000, because he "would fix it when he

* It is ironic that in January 1925, Nelson wrote to the "Director-General," stating, "I have had nothing to do with the erection of our house, this being entirely in the hands of Professor Breasted, the Director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, I would much prefer to leave all matters having to do with the relations between ourselves and the government on questions of land entirely to Professor Breasted" (Marks Collection).

† Nelson to Breasted, 7 October 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 689. Nelson expressed some additional dissatisfaction with Callender's handling of contracts, as conveyed in a letter of October 9, 1925, to T. George Allen: "One thing has emerged as a result of my experience with building and building materials in the last year, namely the excessive cost of our house. It is too late to cry over spilt milk, but the contractor whom Callender employed certainly made a very handsome sum out of his contract" (ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 543), and on October 17, 1927, to Breasted, commenting that Callender was making what "seems like a deliberate attempt on his part to hold us up."

returned so I would have to pay a large sum for it, which would profit all concerned." Hartman then took over the negotiations for private land, Nelson apparently trying not to become directly embroiled in the complex negotiations.[36]

The delay in acquiring clear titles to land led Nelson to express concerns about delays in the construction schedule. By summer, it became almost farcical, with Khalil pressuring Nelson by threatening to build a *sakia* (water wheel) and stable "right under the windows of your and our apartments." According to Nelson, Hartman came to the rescue and "put a spoke in his wheel" by checking local building regulations that forbade such construction and "threatened to prosecute if the work continued. Moreover, he told Khalil that if he came even the legal distance from the house, he would make trouble for him, and Khalil abandoned the enterprise. . . . It was a good thing that Hartman was here or we might have had trouble."[37]

The whole affair of buying land took on a cloak-and-dagger aspect because they did not want it known that the entity making the purchase—the Oriental Institute—was funded by Rockefeller, as the prices would rise astronomically. To maintain secrecy, Nelson and Breasted communicated locally through a third party, Awadallah (who was recommended by Herbert Winlock, the head of the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian Expedition), and they used *Bentley's Complete Phrase Code* to prevent the Luxor telegram office from understanding and broadcasting their strategy and progress. Purchases were made through a third party: Vacuum Oil Company in Cairo, a former subsidiary of Rockefeller's Standard Oil.* Negotiations were further delayed when Hartman, who managed the project, became seriously ill, then died in Cairo on December 5, 1926. Nelson also had to negotiate to rent additional land from a Sheikh Hassan, land that was desired to create a buffer against animal noise.[38]

Negotiations with the government were not much smoother. In April, Nelson reported the good and bad news: "I have today received . . . the copy of the contract to build on government land which I signed at Cairo before I left there. . . . As you will see the government refused to grant the lease of the land and we hold it only on precarious tenure. . . . I also had to sign a paper at Cairo, stating that I would tear down the part of the building constructed on Government land if you did not agree to what I had signed. It was the only way in which I can secure any permit to build."[39] But only a week later, he reported that "the Egyptian government at the last moment went back on its promise and refused to sign its own conditions."[40] A few days after that, a new contract was in hand, but again without secure conditions: "When examining it I found that, although we pay rent of PT 100 per year, we hold the land on precarious terms subject to three months' notice to vacate, this notice not carrying with it any obligation for the government to furnish a reason for the evacuation." He cheerfully concluded, "Otherwise the document was satisfactory and included not only the new land we want but also the government land we already occupy."[41] In the end, the new building extended 9 meters west onto government-owned land, and "less than this on the south."[42] Then there was an issue with how long Chicago could occupy the government land. The usual contract stated five years, a duration that Breasted refused.[43] Lacau was unusually cooperative, writing that it was impossible to guarantee anything, and although it was no legal guarantee, Chicago could use the land for a long time ("bien longtemps").[44] On July 25, 1926, Chicago received the signed permission from the government to build.[45]

The issue with private land was not resolved until the end of 1926. In October, Khalil approached Nelson through Hartman, offering "to sell some of his land in front of the house. I have offered him £200 [Egyptian] for one fedan and

* Vacuum Oil was purchased by Standard Oil in 1879 but became independent again in 1919 after Standard was broken up under the Sherman Antitrust Act. Vacuum also acted as a third party for the purchase of the property and the construction tenders for the new Chicago House in 1929 and 1930. See chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–."

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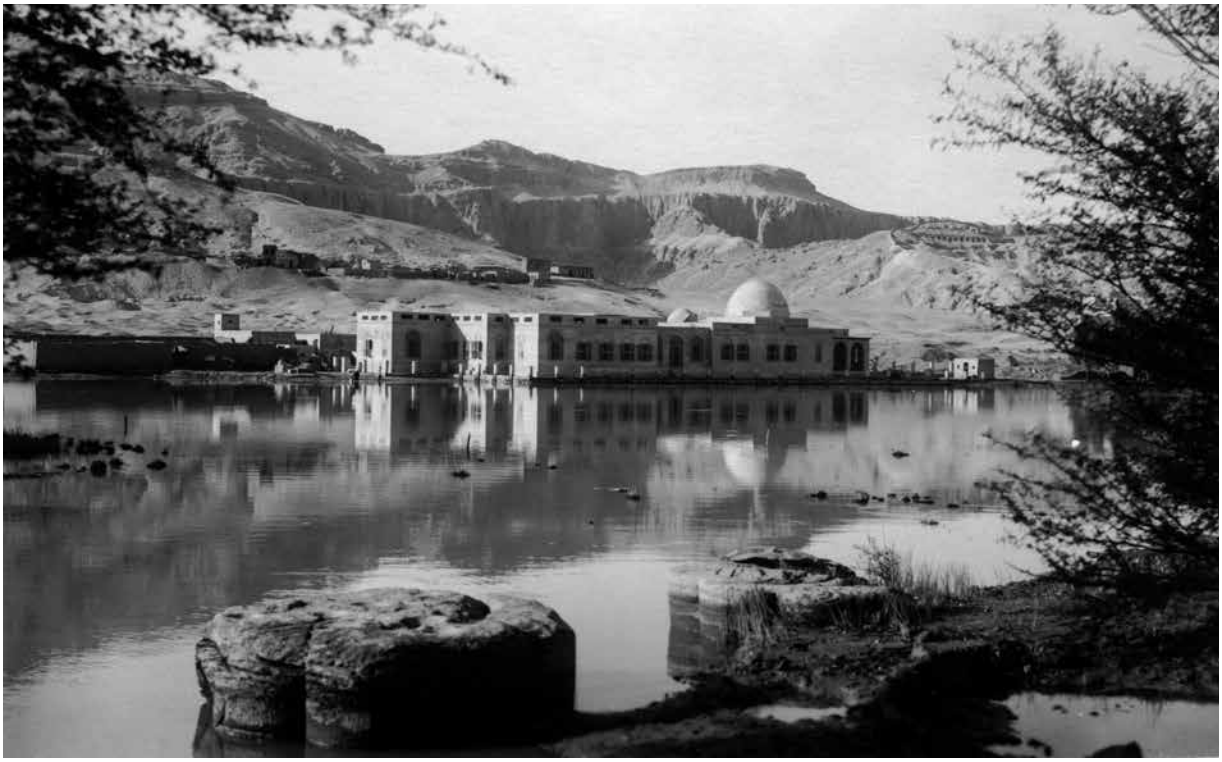

Figure 11.11. View of the Chicago House residence building during the inundation, October 1927. Photo: W. Edgerton Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Hartman seems to think that he will take it. I'm going ahead to buy even if I do not hear from you in the matter that you do not approve."[46] A larger parcel of Khalil's land, which was originally offered for £E700, was acquired for £E300.[47] Ultimately, the residence wing stood on land owned by the University of Chicago, and the library and administrative building was on land leased from the government.[48]

Once the government had granted permission, the work progressed rapidly. The foundations of the new building and the extension of the old house were staked out in mid-April 1926, and construction began later that month.[49] The preliminary budget was £E4,000, about $250,000 in today's dollars.[50]

Construction techniques had to take local conditions into account. First was the rising damp from the annual inundation that, in some years, came "almost up to the front" boundary of the house (fig. 11.11). In April 1927, additional land near the house was acquired from Khalil "for flood protection."[51] An effort to reduce the potential damage from the groundwater was made by placing layers of tar paper "in the walls of the building, just above the stone foundations, and possibly a second layer a meter or so higher up."[52] This precaution was also intended to combat another local hazard—infestations of white ants that crawled up the wall and consumed any and all organic material. As Nelson warned, "We must keep [the ants] out of the Library at all costs, for the insect is very destructive of books."[53] There was also a discussion about lining the library walls with sheets of cork to combat dampness.

The concern over the library caused Nelson "more thought than all the remainder of the structure together." This part of the complex was built of more durable fired brick and concrete that necessitated bringing in an expert from Cairo. Nelson

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reported, "If I find that the cost of the concrete is not excessive, I may also build concrete girders from the central pillars to the outside walls to help carry the thrust of the side vaulting, especially at the corners. The best kind of roofing for the Library would be reenforced concrete covered with a thick brick, but I am afraid that would cost too much. I shall investigate the whole matter in Cairo."[54]

The library was originally a square room topped with a dome, about which Nelson expressed his concerns:

> I wish it were possible to save some of the floor space in the library that will be occupied by the pillars supporting the central dome. Is it possible to leave out the smaller pillars between the corner ones and make the span of the arches that carry the dome reach from one corner pillar to the adjacent corners? We would save some room that way. Of course, a flat roof would save still more, but it would make the waterproofing of the roof more difficult. I am afraid that we are going to find ourselves cramped for floor space according to the present plan.[55]

His worries about the dome were prescient. Indeed, from the time it was built, its structural integrity was a problem. The letters give the impression that the design was ad hoc on Nelson and Hartman's part without advice from an experienced architect or engineer. Nelson later reported:

> Awadallah [the local builder] is very unwilling to build the vaulted roof of the Library with a larger span than three meters. I refer to the side vaulting, not to the central dome. The whole construction, with the dome resting on the pillars and the side vaulting, is a little strange to him. Hartman and I have decided to try joining the tops of the four pillars below the dome by reenforced concrete making a solid square of concrete on the top of the pillars and the connecting arches. This will give a firm foundation for the dome and will help to carry the thrust of the side arches. We shall also have to reduce the side vaulting to three meters and enlarge the dome correspondingly.[56]

Late in 1926, just months after the new complex was completed, construction flaws became apparent. Uvo Hölscher, the head of the Architectural Survey (see chapter 4, "Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926–1936") and a trained architect, expressed his concerns about the structural integrity of the house and especially the library. Some of the faults were attributed to Hartman's "cutting corners" in the construction. In early December 1926, Nelson wrote:

> Another matter is worrying me very much. When I first arrived I found that one of the arches that support the dome of the Library had sunk or flattened a little. This was due to a slight movement laterally in one of the pillars that support the dome. Hartman informed me that this had happened before the dome was built. I was surprised to hear it and to realize that he had not had the matter rectified at once. Then I asked him if he had built the re-enforced concrete beams joining the tops of the four pillars above the arches. . . . He said that he had consulted with an Italian workman in concrete in Cairo and had found that the beams would have cost too much, something like £Eg. 60. I was very much disappointed, but it was then too late to do anything as the structure was completed. I did not feel that we had any legal claim on the contractor, for the omission of the girders was approved by our representative. Since then I have been watching the arches and dome carefully. I found also that the walls of the Library, though they are a meter thick, twenty-five cms thicker than those of the sitting-room, had bowed outward, two at a considerable angle. Hartman and the contractor both vowed that the movement had ceased, but I was skeptical. I have since found that the weight of the dome on the pillars is causing a steady settling which is producing cracks in the arches under the dome and also in the barrel arches on either side,

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> above the ambulatory. Today Borchardt [head of the Swiss Mission with whom Hölscher worked previously] was here and with him and Hölscher I went over the whole matter of the defect in the structure. They both seemed to think that there was no immediate danger but told me to watch carefully. The dome itself is still solid, but it is a great weight on the pillars. . . . We may be able to bind the whole structure together with iron rods sunk in the plaster so that there will be no further cracking or we may have to build up somewhat in the archways so as to reduce the span of the arches. Hartman made the arches too flat in the beginning and this increased the thrust considerably. . . . But the matter has developed since then so that something must be done about it before many months. I do not think that it will ever be necessary to tear the dome down, but changes in the room, such as filling in the arches somewhat, will not increase its present pleasing aspect. I hope that you will come up to Luxor soon after you reach Cairo so that you may pass judgment on the matter. I fear that the resting of the dome on piers was not architecturally sound, for the piers rest on Gebel, not rock, and though the gebel is solid foundation for ordinary walls, it is after all only earth. I feel that the core of the difficulty lies in the omission of the concrete girders.[57]

In 1927, Hölscher supervised repairs to the library (fig. 11.12). He turned the unstable "Moorish dome" of the library into "Byzantine arches" by removing the dome, reducing the size of its supporting piers, and transforming the space into a three-aisle basilica plan with a window seat in the apse (fig. 11.13).[58] The tall, pointed arches to the north and south were flanked by shorter arches. The flat wooden roof was planked with an overlying decorative cross-pattern of slats. The alcoves created by the walls that delineated the aisles were filled with bookcases. Italian workers were again contracted for the work.[59]

The redesign of the library was only part of the modifications undertaken in late 1926 and 1927. Iron beams were used to reinforce the wooden ceilings of several rooms. Nelson commented, "I feel somewhat reluctant to run any risk of our roofs falling. Fortunately, such iron beams do not cost much and are not difficult to insert, so that we should make things perfectly safe without difficulty."[60] Minor changes were made to the floor plan of the library/office building. The bath off the long vestibule to the south of the library was turned into an office, and the passage that had separated the building from the service building to the south was eliminated and replaced by three bedrooms and an additional bath. An outbuilding was erected to the south of the service quarters, allowing for the construction of more quarters for the Egyptian staff and for the garage to be moved to the far south end of the building. In November 1927, Nelson applied to chief inspector Tewfik Boulos for permission to dig "two cesspools and a settling tank" on state-owned land to accommodate the "large household." Nelson assured him that the installation would be covered and completely invisible.[61]

Nelson and Breasted continued their frequent communication throughout the project, Breasted expressing interest and concern for the smallest details. For instance, in the planning stage, Nelson mused:

> With regard to the baths, I am a little puzzled. The two we now have must be reserved for the five women who will live in the old house. In the new house, we have three for the people there, one of which will be used almost exclusively by your secretary, now that the room for the Librarian is not to be in that wing. There remain six men to be provided for. Bollacher really needs a bath to himself, for he always takes about an hour and shuts out the rest of the folks. He soaks, rather than bathes. To be sure, there is the shower which some would prefer. It might be possible to put in a second shower by the new bathrooms in the building behind the present house and that would give us accommodations enough. I believe that would be the best solution. We must remember that when you are here

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Figure 11.12. Rebuilding of the library when the dome was replaced with a flat roof, January 13, 1927. The dome of the residence is in the background. Photo: C. Ransom Williams, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

> with your family, we shall have 10 women, including Irene [Nelson's daughter], and 8 men. It will be some household. If we get another draughtsman that will increase our number.[62]

In 1928, Nelson tried to protect the house from encroachment by buying the adjacent plot from Khalil. Although he wanted the land, he was concerned for the future and a possible move: "The more land we buy the harder it is going to be for us to get away from here when the time comes. In fact it may make it almost impossible."Khalil was reviving his annoying threat to build the *sakia* under the field director's bedroom window, on which Nelson commented:

> To purchase the land we want to protect the house, and it is only a problematic protection, would take £800 for I do not believe that Khalil will come down one piaster as soon as we approach him. He has had too many nice plums drop into his lap from our tree for him to move fast or to give way . . . if Khalil digs the *sakia* and we do not purchase, it may mean that you will find it impossible to use either Mrs. Breasted's or Irene's room. The noise may be so great that you cannot sleep. On the other hand, if we buy, we of course become the laughing stock of both natives and foreigners here and let ourselves in for a greatly increased cost of everything. . . . If we must push this matter through in a hurry, we must pay practically what he asks.

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Figure 11.13. The library after Hölscher's redesign, which removed the dome and added "Byzantine arches" and a flat roof, ca. 1928. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

Uncharacteristically, he signed off with "I devoutly hope that Khalil dies this summer."[63] By December the offending *sakia* was built and operating, and Nelson stoically ignored the noise.

Life at the Old Chicago House

When Chicago House first opened in 1924, it housed four people—field director Harold Nelson and his wife, Libbie; German artist Alfred Bollacher; and Austrian photographer John Hartman (fig. 11.14)—and had an Egyptian staff of nine (fig. 11.15). For the fall 1926 season, with the larger accommodations, American epigraphers Caroline Ransom Williams, John Wilson, and William F. Edgerton; Edgerton's wife, Jean; Italian artist Virgilio Canziani and his wife; and British librarian Phoebe Byles joined the members of the original staff (fig. 11.16). That same season, the staff of the Architectural Survey arrived, adding German architect Uvo Hölscher (and his wife, Ottilie, who lived at the house for most seasons); his assistant architects, the German Hans Steckeweh and American Edward DeLoach (the latter from the University of Chicago's Megiddo Expedition); and American photographer Arthur Morrison. In 1927, British artist Anthony Chubb and Swedish photographer Olaf Lind joined the Epigraphic Survey's staff, filling the house even further.

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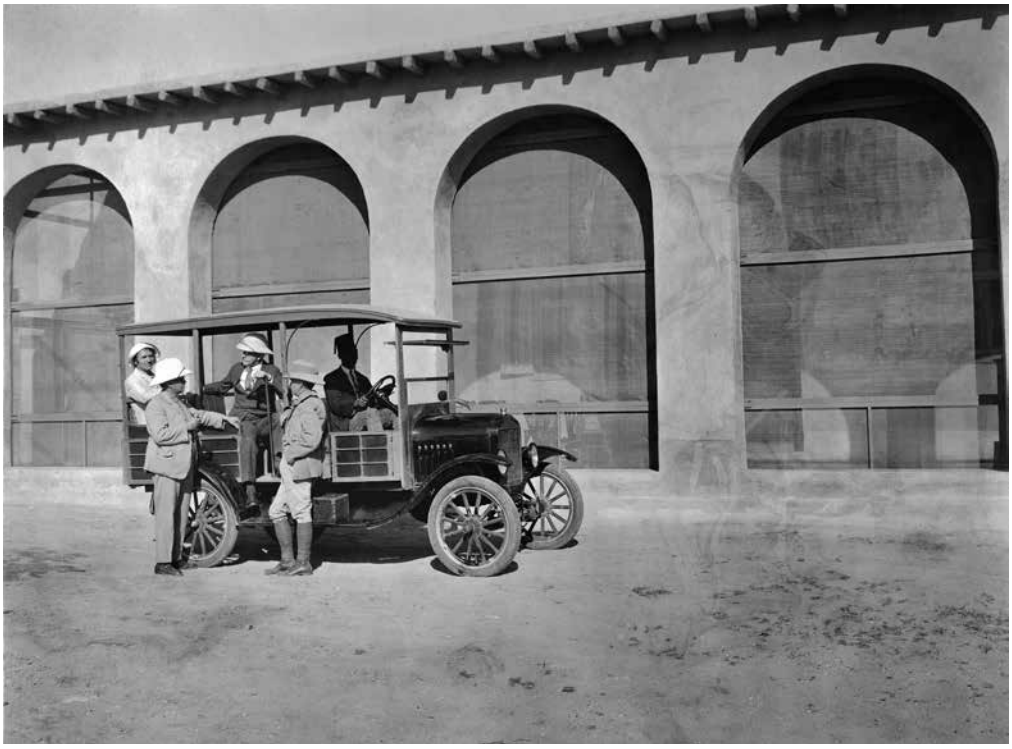

Figure 11.14. Staff in front of Chicago House, 1925. Left to right: Alfred Bollacher, Harold Nelson, James H. Breasted (who was visiting), John Hartman, and chauffeur Iliya Gabriel. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

There was an unspoken but acknowledged ranking of the staff. At the top, of course, was field director Nelson, and just a bit below (depending on whom one asked)* was Hölscher, the head of the Architectural Survey. According to artist Donald Wilber, "The top level was that of the Egyptologists; the second level that of the five artists; and the third, although not necessarily lower in rank than the second, included the business manager, the photographer, the librarian and the mechanics. Local help—I quickly gave up the term 'native'—included the Sudanese waiters and houseboys, and the 'ladder men.'"[64]

The size of the staff was most apparent at dinner when they all sat together (fig. 11.17). As Wilson recalled, "Not counting a few regular visitors, twenty-two persons from five different countries sat down for three meals a day. At the end of an intensive six-month season they would be heartily tired of one another. This has been the normal experience in every field expedition I have known. It did not break friendships, which remained warm after the season ended and the daily pressure was relieved."[65] Seating at the dinner table became an especially sensitive subject, as Nelson recalled: "Living as we do in daily close contact is not always easy for any of us to avoid giving and receiving offense. This is the common experience of all such isolated groups. Only good will and determination not to take offense can overcome such difficulties."[66] But there were some memorable blowups. One was the subject of several letters between Nelson and Breasted. In April 1927, Bollacher was not seated with guests, although Hölscher was, and Bollacher took tremendous offense. Nelson reported to Chicago, "He

* For the early relationship between Nelson and Hölscher, and the latter's desire to have the same rank as Nelson, see "Relations between the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys" in chapter 4.

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Figure 11.15. Chicago House staff, 1924. Left to right: Unidentified, Mahmoud, Abd el-Qader, unidentified, Selim (seated), Ali, Abu el-Hakim, Mahmoud, and chauffeur Iliya Gabriel. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

[Bollacher] said he was convinced that Hoelscher was not invited to sit at the table and thrust himself into the company; that he thought himself better than others and was always trying to get into the lime light; that he looked down upon the Bollachers as beneath him etc. etc."[67] In Nelson's account, "the scene with Bollacher was painful in the extreme. I do not remember ever having had such an experience. . . . Mrs. Edgerton is on nervous edge all the time and vows she is actually afraid of him."[68]

The situation escalated on another evening when Mrs. Nelson was away from the house and Nelson seated Mrs. Edgerton in her place at the end of the table, partly because of her seniority (Edgerton was considered to be Nelson's "second") but also because she spoke English (Augusta Bollacher spoke only German). The first evening, Nelson related to Breasted, "passed without trouble." But, Nelson continued, "on third day at noon, Mrs. Bollacher made a point of rushing in first into the dining room" to grab the coveted seat; Bollacher spoke to Edgerton, trying to broker a deal that either Mrs. Bollacher should sit at the end "or else all the ladies must assume that seat in rotation."

The next day, Mrs. Edgerton was again seated at the head, leading to total silence from the Bollachers. But after dinner, Bollacher asked the field director why he had "insulted" his wife. Nelson recounted, "The whole sitting-room was spellbound. . . . The man was beside himself and once or twice I expected him to strike me." The mood was so dark that photographer Lind stood by to protect Nelson if necessary. Nelson continued, "I never looked into such wild eyes before as those of the face that was

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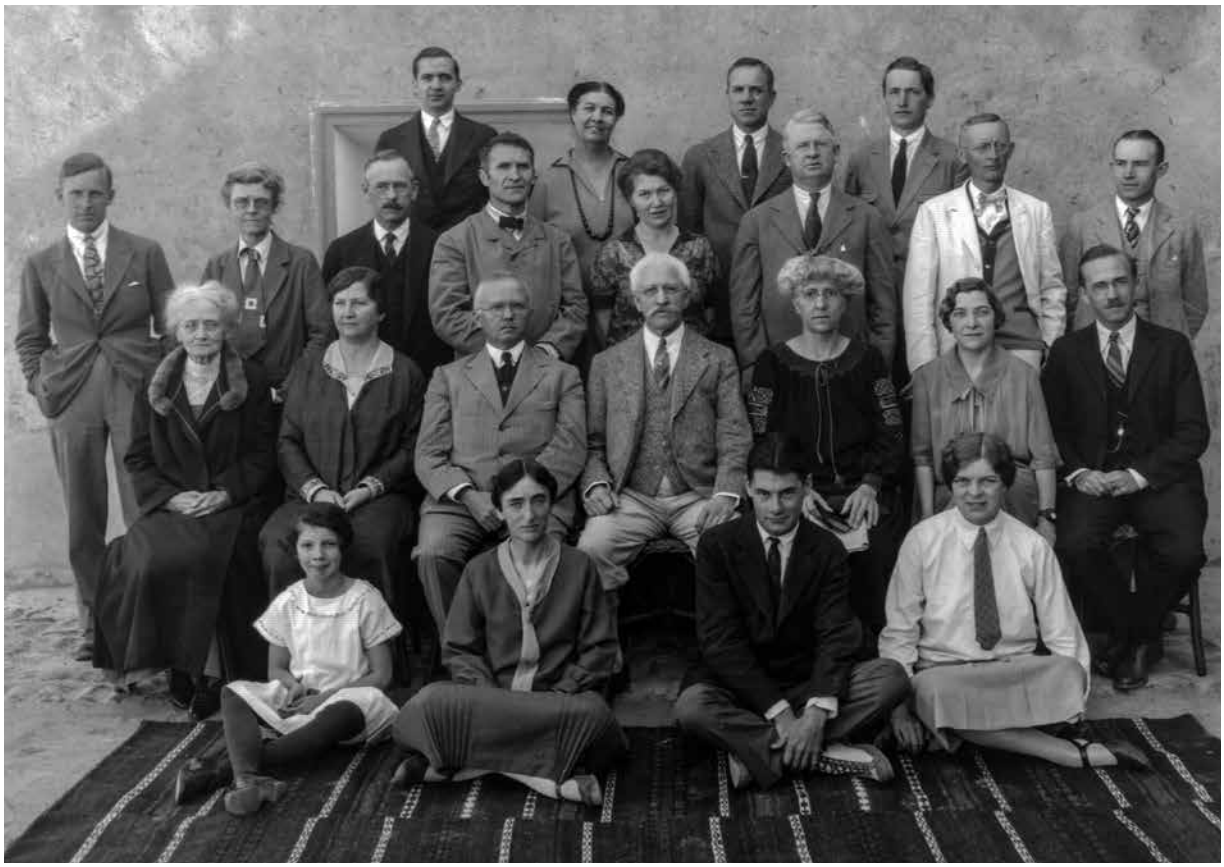

Figure 11.16. Staff and visitors, 1927. Left to right, top: Robert Barr (assistant to Breasted), Mrs. Canziani, Virgilio Canziani, Adriaan de Buck. Second row: Bayfield Clark, Caroline Ransom Williams, Clarence Fisher (field director of the Megiddo Expedition), Alfred and Augusta Bollacher, Sir Alan Gardiner, Uvo Hölscher, Edward DeLoach. Third row: Ella Ransom, Libby and Harold Nelson, James and Frances Breasted, Jean and William Edgerton. On floor: Irene Nelson, Phoebe Byles, John and Mary Wilson. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

thrust into mine. They were those of a mad man." He grumbled, "The matter is a very trivial one over which to have trouble," but he felt his request that Mrs. Edgerton sit at the end of the table should be respected. Further, despite his having given "away [*sic*] in everything to Bollacher so far and have held myself in many more times than I have ever told you of," the latest was just too much: "This year . . . has been full of trouble. The whole household is upset and there is a strong feeling of discontent. . . . But it is certain that Bollacher and I can no longer occupy the same house. . . . I must ask that Bollacher not return next year for he and I cannot work together. . . . That he is insane is beyond doubt."[69]

When Bollacher gave Nelson a letter in which he declared that he no longer would socialize with the members of the Survey, Nelson replied to him, "It is impossible for one to be among us and not of us. Your presence here under such conditions would be a daily reminder of the unpleasantness and misunderstandings of the past. Responsible as I am for the welfare of our work, which cannot be separated from our social life as a community, I find it impossible for me to agree to any such arrangement as you propose."[70] Nelson also mentioned to Breasted, "I now find several other outbursts of which I knew nothing till after last night's events," and "There've been several times this winter when . . . Bollacher has

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Figure 11.17. Christmas dinner at Chicago House, 1927. Standing, at top of photo: Hassan, Hussein, Abd el-Qader. Left side of table (from rear): Harold Nelson, Phoebe Byles, Virgilio Canziani, Alfred Bollacher, Olaf Lind, Edward DeLoach, Irene Nelson, Ottilie and Uvo Hölscher. Right side (from rear): Libbie Nelson, William Edgerton, Anthony Chubb, Ruby Woodley, John and Mary Wilson, Ilyas Khuri, Hans Steckeweh. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

gone off to the top of the hill, at one time starting out after dinner and only returning at midnight, his wife meanwhile sitting and crying in their room."[71] In another letter from earlier in 1927, Nelson reported, "Canziani and Bollacher are at swords points. Each has come to complain about the other, and I have been compelled to ask Edgerton to work in the draughting room so as to keep the peace."[72]

Meanwhile, Breasted—who was, after all, the staff's ultimate supervisor—was fully apprised by Nelson of the emotional toll all this turmoil was costing the field director. In late April 1927, Breasted wrote to his colleague in Luxor: "You did not hear from me while I was away owing to the most extraordinary complications which I have yet met in the conduct of the Oriental Institute. Three pathological cases:—Allen, Bollacher and Fisher* have kept me fairly busy and raised the question whether I might not successfully secure employment as superintendent of a lunatic asylum."[73]

Bollacher continued to test Nelson's patience, but he was such a good artist that allowances were made for his antisocial behavior. In February 1929, another outburst led to an exchange between Nelson and Charles Breasted about how Bollacher's services could be retained "without involving him in any social relations with the Expedition." Nelson suggested that Bollacher be separated from the staff at Chicago House and live at the nearby Savoy Hotel, where he "would find plenty of Germans . . . and ought to be happy there." He would be put to work on the most vulnerable reliefs at Karnak Temple, and since most of those areas were close to the ground, he would need only a single ladder man.[74] Breasted approved of the idea but expressed concern that someone "so sensitive and cranky and cantankerous a fellow as B. will not be running foul of Chevrier or someone else in the Service at Karnak," and that "by some damnfool outburst and insulting treatment of the Service people," Bollacher "should lose us altogether the chance of doing the whole temple."[75] So, Bollacher continued to live at Chicago House. Charles Breasted commented to Nelson, "I think you are very courageous, and by your action are displaying patience worthy of a saint."[76] Although his behavior was vexing to Nelson, Bollacher's talents outweighed his lack of social skills, and the artist remained a valued member of the Survey until 1936.†

* Clarence Fisher was removed as field director of the Megiddo Expedition after the fall 1926 season. Breasted's letter to Nelson (28 April 1927, ISAC Museum Archives) refers to his firing and replacement. See also Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon*, 61–63, 303. It is unclear who "Allen" is—certainly not T. G. Allen, an Egyptologist and student of Breasted's who worked in the publications department of the Oriental Institute and who had a good relationship with Breasted and Nelson.

† Nelson's comment, "I am willing to overlook the language Bollacher used out of consideration of the fact that he is not

Beyond Bollacher, friction from living in such small quarters arose between other staff members, some of it caused by differing temperaments or nationalities (see "Relations between the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys" in chapter 4). In early 1926, Nelson complained to Breasted that photographer Hartman "has developed an intense dislike of Callender" and commented that Hartman "is as impossible as a child."[77] He also described Keith Seele, who was on staff from 1929 through the 1935 season, as "a hard worker, very serious, in fact a little too much so, but apparently of limited experience. He is not popular in the household, who have cultivated a veneer of frivolity which he scorns. His unfortunate habit of turning almost every reply to a question into a lengthy lecture is also trying at times."[78] On a more positive note, he characterized epigrapher Caroline Ransom Williams, who was in residence for only the 1926 season, as "a very excellent example of the utmost devotion to her work."[79]

A bigger problem, one that indeed precipitated a separation from the Survey, was Hölscher's photographer Arthur Morrison's (fig. 11.18) continuing "effort to reform Egypt" by "beating up various individuals who were, in his opinion, maltreating animals." Nelson reported to Breasted:

> In one case he had a regular fight as the native struck back. Aside from the very disgraceful nature of his actions, Morrison is making us very unpopular in the neighborhood. Of course, in the native eyes, we are all identified with the business. Just at present, with the disturbed state of things when at any moment feeling may take an anti-foreign turn, there is an element of more serious nature in the situation Morrison is creating. I have talked with him and I have put before him the seriousness of the situation. . . . He maintains that he cannot do otherwise. He is unable to keep his hands off people who abuse animals. . . . Personally I shall be glad when he goes, although he is certainly a far better photographer than we are likely to find again without great difficulty.[80]

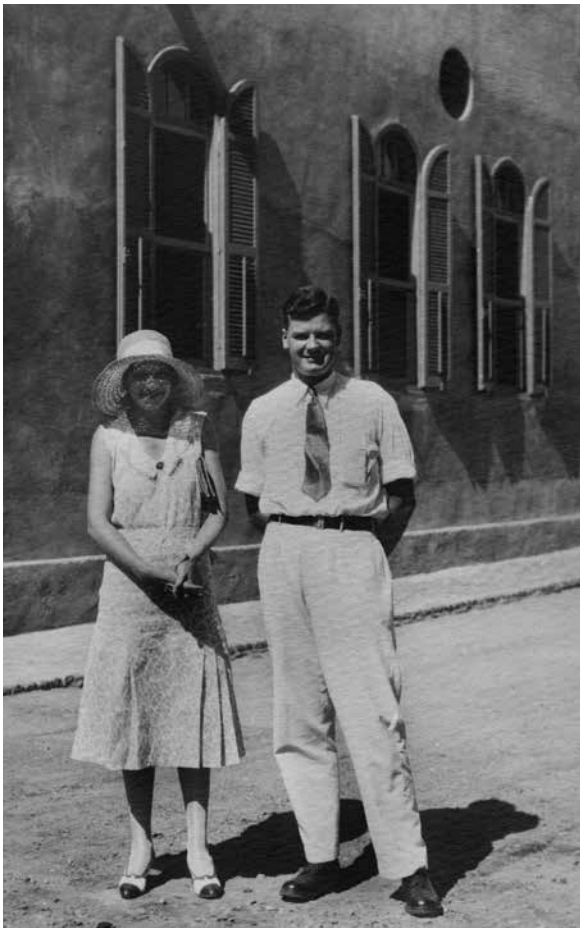

Figure 11.18. Janet Woolman and Arthur Q. Morrison, photographer and animal lover, at Chicago House, 1930. Photo: Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

Nelson was also concerned by Morrison's "disciplining" the *sabbakhin*, men who were removing soil from the excavation dump at night, because he "has quite a collection of whips in his office. Today, the police are to investigate the situation."[81] Nelson worried further about Morrison's plan to marry a woman he had met only once and the amount of alcohol he consumed.[82]

Visitors created additional headaches for Nelson. He complained about the house, especially after its enlargement, being treated as a hotel. Special

responsible," and several references to "when the fit was on" (Nelson to Breasted, 9 April 1927, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 839) suggest that Bollacher was subject to depression.

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requests from people to whom it was difficult to say no posed particular problems. There are several letters in 1926 about Sir Alan Gardiner's desire to have Adriaan de Buck, who was engaged in Chicago's Coffin Texts Project in Cairo, come to Chicago House. That December, Gardiner wrote to Nelson, "I hope a chance will be given to de Buck to see Thebes this winter. As I have written to Professor Breasted, nothing could be more deadening than to copy one single type of text year in year out without change, and for the success of our Coffin Text enterprise, I hope that some variety will be found for de Buck.[83] Nelson was not at all enthusiastic, because there was simply no room in the house and, he explained to Breasted, "I am not over anxious for any more epigraphic assistance. What I want now is more draughtsmen."[84] But Gardiner prevailed, declaring to Nelson's annoyance that he would stay with Norman and Nina de Garis Davies in western Thebes so that his room could be given to de Buck. De Buck and Gardiner appear prominently in the 1927 official staff photograph (see fig. 11.16), although they were not on the staff.

Unfortunately, documentation of the Egyptian staff is incomplete. A group photo from the first season (1924; see fig. 11.15) shows five housemen (one holding his duster) and three other men—presumably guards or senior staff, in black abayas—while chauffeur Iliya Gabriel wears a tarbush and trousers* (fig. 11.19; see also figs. 11.14–11.15). Sadik was the handyman for the house in 1927. Nelson regarded him as being "most promising," and rather than paying him a small summer retainer in Luxor, he investigated the possibility of sending him to Assiut or Cairo, or even to the Megiddo Expedition, to learn more about carpentry and plumbing.[85] The chief guard, Khalil, worked at the old house as well as at the new Chicago House until his death in 1938.[86] Ilyas Khuri was the field director's assistant, responsible for "the servants, workmen and household business generally."[87] In one budget, he is listed as

Figure 11.19. Iliya Gabriel, who worked as chauffeur for the Survey from 1924 to 1947, with the Ford station wagon. Photo: J. Wilson, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

"accountant."† He was employed from 1927 to 1931. His skills were highly valued, as Charles Breasted wrote to Nelson about finding Khuri's successor: "The more I consider the matter, the more I am convinced that no one we might find here would meet your requirements as regards experience and familiarity with the Orient."[88]

It should be no surprise that in the 1930 season, Nelson pleaded with Breasted to hire a house manager and a secretary when they moved to Luxor the

* Iliya Gabriel was to be the driver for Chicago House until his retirement in 1947.

† Nelson was very conscious of Khuri's education (he was an AUB graduate) and background (he was the son of an AUB professor), and he was adamant that he be called "Mr. Khuri" rather than "Ilyas Effendi" in recognition of his status in the household, declaring, "Khuri will eat at the same table with the rest of us, and will be treated as a full member of the household" (Nelson to Breasted, 19 September 1927, CHP 1587). See figs 11.17 and 11.23.

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following year, complaining that his administrative duties and personnel management left him no time even to write the introductions to the Survey publications. First, they looked for someone already in Egypt who could function in Egyptian Arabic and manage the shopping and supplies. He would be expected to live apart from the "scientific staff," in the mechanic's quarters, so as not be regarded as a full "member of the household."[89]

Khuri's successor as business manager was Alfred Voneschen, who had worked in Egypt but most recently was employed in Swiss hotels.[90] Although Nelson was happy to have a new manager, he was doubtful that Voneschen would fit in, writing, "He has all the manners of a hotel clerk, which he probably will continue to have in Luxor, but in some ways, as they will inevitably divide him from the remainder of the household, they may be of service. As he knows many of the hotel people in Luxor, he will probably find his friends among them, rather than in the house. It would be well for him if he did not become too much a member of the household, but kept himself somewhat aloof."[91] Within a few months some problems emerged, as Voneschen was unable to adapt to the "family" feel of Chicago house, treating the staff like "hotel guests." Nelson let him settle into his household duties before turning the finances over to him.[92]

The wives of staff members were a part of the house community, and initially they were welcome, as indicated by a 1927 memo from Nelson to Breasted: "Chubb said he expects to bring his wife out with him next year, which will make eight married couples in the house."[93] However, Nelson worried that the wives would become bored: "If the ladies have something to do, it will be the better for all concerned."[94] Nelson's thinking on spouses at the house was grounded in his experience at the American University of Beirut. He recalled to Breasted:

> Since I wrote you yesterday regarding the employment of staff wives in the library, I have thought more carefully over the subject and I am not so keen for it. At Beirut, we have tried employing professors' wives in the library and other capacities and have given up the practice. If matters are not satisfactory, it is very difficult to make a change, as the husbands generally take the part of the wives. We had one or two very disagreeable situations as a consequence of this practice. It would be possible to call upon the ladies in an emergency. But you know that some expeditions have got into difficulty over the wife question. However, as I have engaged Miss Byles,* the matter is settled for the present season.[95]

Still, spouses did come to live at the house, and Nelson tried to keep them busy. Mary Wilson was assigned to library duty while Phoebe Byles was out sick in early 1927; Mrs. Edgerton assumed other duties; and later, Diederika Seele was encouraged to assist the photographer, later serving as registrar for the Architectural Survey and as translator for the first three Architectural Survey volumes.

There were few female "scientific" staff. Caroline Ransom Williams served as epigrapher in 1926.† In the formal staff photo, Ransom Williams, like her male colleagues, wears a necktie (see fig. 11.16). Her presence, as another protégée of Breasted's, was welcome, with Nelson writing, "She is just the person we need" to check Bollacher's drawings, and "I wanted her services especially."[96]

In 1927, Nelson expressed new concerns about the number of spouses (and children) that the staff wanted to bring with them. This desire was hardly unreasonable, considering that the staff would be abroad for more than half the year, but it created logistical problems. In early April, Nelson advised Breasted, "By the way, Bollacher has told several

* Phoebe G. Byles served as librarian and Nelson's secretary from 1926 through the 1935 season.

† There would not be another female epigrapher until 1977, when Ann Macy Roth joined the staff.

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Figure 11.20. Irene Nelson on a donkey near Chicago House, December 1926. Photo: C. Ransom Williams, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

members of the household, but not myself, that he wants to bring both his wife and daughter with him next season. It is going to make an unpleasant situation I fear, when I point out to him that there is no room for the daughter. With Mrs. Canziani, a possible Mrs. Chubb, and two more Bollachers, our problems will increase."[97]

The question of spouses living at the house was examined again in 1930, when the strongly opinionated Charles Breasted assumed more administrative responsibilities. In March, he proclaimed his displeasure with extra people in the house: "I express my opinion regarding the Hoelschers, the Bollachers and all the others who wish to park their families in the comfort of our establishment for a payment of board which amounts to only a fraction of the actual cost to us."[98] He also seemed annoyed by the presence of children in the house. For instance, Irene Nelson (fig. 11.20) started living at the house in 1924, being initially attended by Amelia (Melia) Baz Murhij, her nanny from Beirut, and later by a Swiss governess and tutor, Miss L. Caillat (whom Irene recalls disliking), until she went to boarding school in Alexandria and then America.* The decidedly antifamily attitude on the part of Chicago

* One letter from Breasted to Nelson refers to an early discussion of Irene's schooling, asking, "Is she to be sent to Assiut?" (4 November 1925, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 553). By December 1927, Nelson was moved to comment, "I shall have my hands full with Irene to look after, for she is becoming more difficult to supervise as time goes on. We should certainly not bring her back to Luxor again next season" (Nelson to Breasted, 30 December 1927, ISAC Museum Archives). The next year, she was enrolled at Schutz School in Alexandria, and

House leadership would persist when the transition was made to the new Chicago House in Luxor.[99]

Health—or rather ill health—was a persistent problem. There are frequent references to most of the staff being sick, and to Chicago House as "our hospital," with Nelson jokingly writing to Breasted, "Next year I am going to apply for a doctor and a nurse as additions to our staff."* There was so much concern over health that some of the plans for the new Chicago House to be built in 1930–31 included a bedroom designated the "sick room."† Librarian Phoebe Byles was especially delicate and incapacitated almost every year. People were in bed for days with gastrointestinal ailments but also more serious problems, including dengue fever (Morrison) and typhoid fever (Chubb). Morrison also had a "long incarceration" in the hospital after injuring his back in a fall in the Chicago House engine room.[100] The 1930 season was particularly bad. Nelson reported, "Our hospital goes merrily along. . . . We have had more illness in this season than almost all the preceding seasons put together, and no two illnesses are the same. . . . Our doctor bills are going to be very large this year." At that time, Seele had been out for four weeks, Morrison was in a Cairo hospital, and Siegfried Heise (of the Architectural Survey) was down with amoebic dysentery.[101] As with Morrison, the seriously ill were sent to Cairo or to the Assiut American Hospital, which "had a good reputation" and was staffed by three American doctors.[102] In early 1930, a hospital opened in Luxor, just south of the site of the future new Chicago House.[103] There were repeated disputes whether the university would cover the staff's medical bills.[104]

One suspect cause for the ill health was milk purchased from a neighbor woman. Another, likelier culprit was the well near the house. By the end of November 1927, it was suspected of being contaminated by the nearby "cess-pit." To make matters worse, the wall of the cesspit collapsed and further threatened Chicago House's water source. Then the water quality degraded markedly with the operation of its neighbor Khalil's *sakia*, being described as "almost yellow-green."[105] Finally, the water was tested and found to be full of fluorescein. Even freshly laundered clothes smelled of it. Another test showed high levels of fecal matter from the adjacent drain field. That summer, the house explored the possibility of pumping water (with the permission of Hermann Junker) from German House, which proved too expensive, or digging an artesian well. In the meantime, rumors circulated at the house that someone was adding chlorine to the water or that the photographer's chemicals were the root of the problem. Nelson responded to Charles Breasted, "Can you picture the *mudir*, in rubber soled shoes, with a dark lantern, peeping out of a crack of his sitting room door about 2:00 o'clock in the morning of a dark night, listening, waiting, breathless and grinning with diabolical glee, and then creeping stealthily to the well, listening again, and the deed is done. The chlorine is down in the water, where it will pollute the joyous baths of the whole household, including his own."[106]

Then there were problems such as when, in October 1929, Canziani informed Nelson that he would have to live in Luxor for the season "as the doctor has prescribed a course of diet that made such residency necessary," and that he expected the Survey to provide his Luxor residence with "table water, silver, linen, blankets, soap, dishes, and probably furniture."[107] Not surprisingly, Nelson refused

in 1935, she moved to New Hope, Pennsylvania, to board at Holmquist School.

* Nelson to Breasted, 19 October 1928, ISAC Museum Archives; Nelson to Breasted, 16 January 1930, CHP 197; Nelson to Breasted, 8 January 1931, CHP 196. Libbie Nelson had considerable medical training. According to her daughter Irene's memories, she came to Lebanon in 1900 as a "private duty nurse to a missionary" and traveled through the countryside by horse "tending to people's illnesses. A man accompanied her with two other horses, one carrying the medical supplies. She carried a bedroll and would sleep on the floor of farmer's homes." Later, Libbie was in charge of the eye department at the American University Hospital in Beirut.

† See "schemes" 1, 2, and 5 (figs. 12.4, 12.5, 12.7) in chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–."

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Figure 11.21. Bedroom at Chicago House furnished with metal furniture (small table, rocking chair, desk chairs, and bedsteads) in imitation of wood, December 1926. The chairs and table in the foreground are Kaltex-brand "wicker" made of wire wrapped in paper. Much of this furniture is still in use at the present-day Chicago House. Photo: C. Ransom Williams, Ransom Williams Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

and informed him that if he chose to live elsewhere, he was welcome to, but at his own expense.

A few photographs show the interior spaces of the expanded Chicago House. At least some of the bedrooms were small and furnished simply with a single metal-framed bed, a dresser, and a table and chair (fig. 11.21). Little ornaments, such as custom lampshades with beaded fringe (which were deemed "a great success"), brightened the spaces.*

More photos survive of the library, showing that it was furnished with heavy wooden chairs, metal-topped tables, and metal bookshelves (see fig. 11.13), many of which are still in use today. Bedouin carpets acquired by the Nelsons took the chill off the tile floors.

The epigraphic staff worked at the temple in the morning and returned to the nearby house for lunch. To Nelson's annoyance, the staff of the Architectural Survey often ate their lunch at the temple. Daily teatime (a tradition that has continued to this day) was fondly remembered even many years later by Rudolf Anthes: "I could imagine that it would be very nice to once again be able to drink tea à la Luxor-Chicago House with ginger snaps and orange marmalade!"[108]

In the evening, people gathered around the dining table. Although most of the photos of dinner at the old Chicago House show people in dinner dress (see fig. 11.17), these pictures seem to depict formal

* Nelson to Breasted, 2 February 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 644. A few of these table lamps with colorful beaded fringes and shades cut out with the initials "UC" (University of Chicago) remain in use today.

events—Christmas and Thanksgiving—worthy of recording. Evenings could be enlivened by music from an Orthophonic Victrola and radio and "a good library of . . . records" that Charles Breasted, in a new role as "music critic," personally selected at Lyon & Healy in Chicago, the sixty-four records representing "mellifluous jazz of the less strident kind, and some very delightful classical things of the sort which will gratify the cosmopolitan tastes of Chicago House."[109] Nelson suggested they "will be a great addition to our establishment and ought to help materially to make life at Kurna happier for us all. I hope a little dance music is included among the records, for the younger people might like it."[110] The audio equipment was donated as a result of Breasted's giving "a lantern slide stunt" to some university alumni, impressing them with the mission of the Survey but also mentioning "the long evenings without any diversion of any sort."* Later that year, Nelson reported having had "several concerts and a little dancing; though some of us will have to learn before we can do much with that."[111] Some of the more motivated spouses expressed "a sudden desire . . . to study hieroglyphic," and so in December, Wilson and Edgerton held twice-weekly classes.[112] In spite of the close proximity, there was a level of formality among the residents. In 1928, artist Laurance Longley "began at once calling everyone by their first name which did not go down any too well." Nelson commented that the artist was "squelched" for his "freshness," and afterward, "I noticed a Mr. now prefixed to several names."[113]

Parties animated some evenings. Nelson described a surprise party to celebrate his fiftieth birthday:

> The household turned to and gave me a great send-off on the second half-century. It was all a total surprise to me. They got up a pleasant little dinner and during the course of it Wilson made a speech and the *suffragi* brought in a tray on which was an illuminated card, beautifully and delicately drawn by Canziani, and a little box which contained a scarab of Hatshepsut.† When we reached the sitting room four boys from the dig, under the direction of the *rais*, appeared with a large *zeer*‡ decorated in most unseemly style with a figure of myself, à la Ramses III in his harim, displaying a stout gentleman clothed only in spectacles and a helmet and chucking a damsel, not even so well clothed, under the chin. This was reported to have been among the pots, twenty-seven in number, that Hoelscher has recently taken from Amenardis' burial under her chapel.§ The pot contained an extraordinary collection of 'antikas,' a papyrus, extraordinarily well done by Mrs. Edgerton, a Greek ostraka by Edgerton, a restored glazed tile by Wilson, a poem by Miss Byles, an illuminated Arab manuscript by Chubb and Khuri, a brick stamped, within a cartouche, with UC and HHN, a remarkable painted duck and an equally remarkable cat mummy, two wonderfully well done colored transparencies of Mrs. Nelson by Morrison [fig. 11.22], and a lot of other things too numerous to mention. It was certainly a most delightful occasion for Mrs. Nelson and myself and I appreciate it more than I can tell. It is pleasant to feel that the household have a real regard for the Head demonstrated by the amount of trouble they went to make the occasion a success. I feel somewhat younger today than I did yesterday as a consequence.[114]

Some residents kept their own pets. Keith and Diederika Seele had several cages of birds, and there

* Breasted to Nelson, 18 June 1926, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 744. The donors were Ernest E. Quantrell, who later endowed the prestigious Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching at the University of Chicago, and Frederick Spiek, who played football for four years at the university under the famed coach Amos Alonzo Stagg.

† Now ISAC Museum E25620. The scarab was selected by Percy Newberry, an authority on scarabs.

‡ Water jar.

§ The chapel of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty God's Wife Amenirdis at Medinet Habu.

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Figure 11.22. One of two portraits of Libbie Nelson taken by Arthur Morrison as a fiftieth birthday gift for Harold Nelson, November 1928. Photo: A. Morrison.

were always cats and dogs at the house.[115] But life for the professional staff revolved around their work in the temple, their studios, and the darkroom. Non-pet animals—cobras—were a problem, and there are numerous references to large ones being removed from the house, garden, and workspaces. Nelson reported to Breasted that a "snake about a yard long" was found in the drafting room and that "the snake is now safely in a bottle in M.'s [Morrison's] room for [he] seems to have a passion for snakes."[116]

A major event was the visit of John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his family and entourage, escorted by Breasted, in February 1929 (fig. 11.23). The news was announced to the staff—confidentially—in December 1928, but by that month it was common knowledge in the Luxor community, the news having reportedly been spread by the Winlocks.*

Even the greatly expanded Chicago House became inadequate for the growing staff and mission of the Epigraphic Survey. As Breasted wrote, "In the space of five years the expedition house, with its original staff of three including Dr. Nelson, had grown . . . [to] a European household of some twenty-five people."[117] With the expansion of the work to Karnak, the house on the west bank was inconvenient, as Breasted wrote to Nelson: "I have come to the firm conclusion that it will be almost impossible for us to attempt to do [epigraphy] from this house, even if we had a motor launch. We would lose individually at least two working hours a day."[118] He later explained, "The Institute's work in Egypt during these five significant years had proved itself a permanent thing. It therefore became necessary to plan for a building which should not only house this particular expedition but serve as general headquarters for all the Institute's projects in Egypt, supplanting the old 'Chicago House.'"[119] And so, the move to a new Chicago House on the east bank was initiated.

Chicago House after 1931

Although the new Chicago House was occupied in April 1931 (see chapter 12, "New Chicago House, 1931–"), the University of Chicago did not sell the old Chicago House until spring 1940, long after Nelson assumed it would.

Most of the staff moved to the new house in Luxor, but the old house continued to be used by the members of the Architectural Survey. As Nelson recalled, "Hoelscher informs me that for next season [1931] it will be necessary for him and his staff [then consisting of himself, Steckeweh, and their wives] and Rudolf Anthes to remain here at the present house and not move across the river."[120] In November 1931, Nelson may have had a little personal satisfaction when Hölscher told him "he

* Nelson to Breasted, 18 December 1928, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1669; Nelson to Breasted, 26 December 1928, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1670. Irene Nelson recalled that Rockefeller's visit coincided with her eighth birthday and that he bought ice cream for her and the staff in celebration.

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Figure 11.23. James H. Breasted with John D. Rockefeller Jr. and family at Chicago House, February 1929. Left to right, back row: Phoebe Byles, Mrs. Canziani, Virgilio Canziani, Charles Breasted, Arthur Morrison, Alfred and Augusta Bollacher, Miss Bollacher, Hans Steckeweh, John Wilson. Middle row: William and Jean Edgerton, Libbie Nelson, Abby A. Rockefeller, James H. Breasted, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Harold Nelson, Uvo Hölscher. Bottom row: J. Anthony Chubb, Laurance Longley, Ilyas Khuri, Harald Hanson. Photo: Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

finds looking after the house himself very time consuming, which is not news to me."[121] Nelson also had reservations about Hölscher's setting up a parallel operation funded by the university. He wrote to Charles Breasted of other, less tangible concerns: "The whole matter of the relation of the Gurna ménage to ours will require careful working out. I fear Hoelscher will be inclined to take in many passing German scholars as guests. I shall try to make plain to him that the Institute does not favor guests at its field houses, but I cannot be too emphatic without giving offence. Fortunately the other house ought not to be occupied after this coming season."[122] Nelson's forecast of the schedule was very wrong.

By March 1932, Hölscher wanted to move to the new house, as Nelson reported to Breasted: "Hoelscher is planning to live on this side of the river next year . . . where he desires two rooms for himself, one as a bedroom and one as a study in which he may work on his publication."[123] By 1932, the Gourna house was in poor condition, and Nelson expressed concerns about its structural integrity to Breasted:

> The old house across the river is falling to pieces. Several roofs have already fallen in from dry rot and the walls are badly cracked in some places, even dangerously cracked. Two of the corner arches that support the great dome are broken and before long the dome will be unsafe, I fear. Am I authorized to pull down any of the building that may seem unsafe? Am I authorized, if necessary for economy, to remove the entire building that now stands on Government land? Something must be done about the structure before long. I would like to retain a portion of the original building that stands on our own property. We shall need a rest house of sorts on

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> that side. But if we are to retain the entire lay-out, we must keep it in repair. . . . I cannot put off the matter very long after the water goes down. I imagine that, after removing some of the more valuable fixtures, I could have the remainder removed in exchange for the material contained in it. I think I could dump the old brick on the portion of government land adjoining that is covered with water when the river rises. Under any circumstances we must make the place as sightly as possible. Of course I can do nothing till the antiquities are removed, which will not be till spring.[124]

Breasted responded, "If you find any of the rooms sufficiently threatening so that they are a risk to people who might be in them, I think they should be pulled down without further delay. Otherwise, I would be glad if you could postpone the whole question until my arrival; although I can understand that the date of my coming may be so late that you would not be able to carry any plans for demolishing the rooms. But a half hour's inspection of the place in your company would make it possible to determine our future course much more intelligently."[125]

In 1934, the entire south wing of the residence was demolished. Nelson reported:

> I am removing all the additions we made to the original building, except the large dining room. I have sold all the woodwork and the bathroom and tiles for £60 as they stand, the purchaser to remove them. We had already taken out the piping, electrical fittings, and Yale locks. When the work of removal is completed there will be only walls left standing. These I shall level and dump in the depression on government land between our house and the rest house. The white ant is in the building, in fact it seems to be more or less throughout the house. I am wondering if the pest has attacked the wooden ties that Callender embedded in the walls of the old sitting room below the dome to tie the corners together.[126]

Yet Nelson continued to maintain and upgrade the remaining sections. In 1936, he reported to Wilson (who had succeeded Breasted as director of the Oriental Institute), "The changes at the Gurna house are about completed. We are going to have a pleasant little place in better condition than it ever was."[127] The exchange had an oddly positive note considering that one can only imagine, given the financial conditions of the mid-1930s, that Nelson badly wanted to consolidate operations on the east bank.

The presence of an available and renovated house in western Thebes did not go unnoticed. At the end of 1936, Nelson agreed to rent two bedrooms, the dining room, and the kitchen for four months, at a rate of £E40 per month, to Alexandre Varille, an Egyptologist of the French Institute in Cairo, while he and Clément Robichon excavated the nearby temple of Amenhotep Son of Hapu. Chicago retained control of the rest of the house, because, as Nelson explained to Wilson, "We like to use it sometimes over week ends."[128]

But there was another, less publicized reason for retaining the house. In 1937, in the face of dramatic budget cuts and the reduction of staff, Wilson and Nelson discussed the feasibility of selling the new Chicago House in Luxor and moving back to Gourna: "Should we be able to sell, we could recondition the old house for a small sum and move back there. We would not need Healey* there and could save in many ways though living would be far less pleasant."[129] But after much consideration, the idea was dismissed, partially for the most practical of reasons: "Living in the old house on the west bank would mean a lot of commuting."[130]

In 1938, only part of the original residence building was standing. Late that year, Nelson wrote to Wilson: "Both the buildings in Gurna and those in Luxor survived the flood without showing any effect from it. Mrs. Nelson, Healey and I are going over to the old house tomorrow and have a clearing

* John (Tim) Healey, engineer at the new Chicago House, 1932–70.

out of a lot of junk. I propose to save what is useful to us and to try to dispose of the rest. Nothing is increasing in value by sitting around over there. We might as well get what we can for it."[131]

By 1939, Nelson moved forward on closing the house, writing to Wilson:

> I have sold most of the old furniture from Old Chicago House. I also wrote to the Department of Antiquities asking them what I should do with the antiquities remaining there. This morning the Inspector and I went across to Gurna and looked over the stuff. I told him there were a few pieces I would like to have here at Chicago House. He proposed that I should set them aside, that he would take what he thought the Department might still like, and that he would recommend that the remainder be auctioned off to dealers from Luxor, which is not a bad idea. However, it is too late to do anything about them this season. I am also bringing home an estimate of the value of Old Chicago House, at least the part we own, and we can talk over the sum we would want for it if we could find a buyer.

The reference to the "part we own" is presumably a reference to the land versus the buildings. He further reported, "We received about £E45 for the stuff in Old Chicago House. I have also a check from the Egypt Exploration Society for £55-0-0 in payment for the railway we sold them which is now at Amarah."[132]

But the sale of the house had to wait for paperwork from Chicago, because Nelson had to be authorized by the trustees of the University of Chicago to act on their behalf.[133] This paperwork arrived in early November 1939.

On February 8, 1940, Nelson wrote to Wilson that he had tried to sell the building, but it "was impossible to do so. Its location close by the cultivation makes it undesirable for residents as compared with the hillside behind it. Moreover, it is much better built than any one in Gurna would care to erect or pay for, and the government is certainly not going to take the place for many years to come, if ever. We must continue to pay for its maintenance (and the fabric is, of course, deteriorating and will need repairs soon) or we must tear the place down and sell what is sellable of the material." He commented, "Personally, I am inclined to think it would be best to demolish the place, sell the material, save the guard's pay and future repairs. . . . The one drawback is that to take this step will prohibit us from ever returning to Gurna to live."[134] The market was very good for wood, iron beams, electrical conduit, and fittings because of shortages due to the impending war, and Nelson estimated that he could get at least £E100 for them; they therefore should act then, when the demand was so high.

Several weeks later, he reported that demolition of the section of the house that stood on government property had begun under the supervision of Healey, Chicago House's engineer, and that he was "selling the stuff as it comes out, and as fast as it comes out. There are always people standing around waiting to buy for all building material is at a premium just now, wood especially, as practically none is coming into the country."[135] Four separate entries in the March 1940 ledger note income of £E260.95 from "sale building material from Gourna House."[136] The government kept the "central part of the building, the bedrooms and the offices" for use as a magazine for the objects from the university's excavations.

Nelson said the best offer he had received for the "property which is on our land, including the land itself," was £E150, but he expected he might get more.[137] In early April 1940, Nelson sold it to Sheikh Ali, who intended to operate a hotel with "ten simple rooms."[138] A year later, it was enlarged to create an art center for Mohamed Naqui, a pioneer of modern painting in Egypt. Today, the building, still known locally as "Sheikh Ali's," houses the Marsam Hotel and restaurant (fig. 11.24). In 1970, a two-story addition was built to the south of the remains of Chicago House to serve as a dig house

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Figure 11.24. The Marsam Hotel, which incorporates part of the original Chicago House. Photo: E. Teeter.

for the Italian mission headed by Sergio Donadoni. Today, one enters the Marsam through a new portico leading into the original hallway and past the hotel's gift shop, which is topped with a dome. Entering the courtyard, one can capture the beautiful view across the fields toward the Colossi of Memnon that was enjoyed by the residents of the old Chicago House.

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12 New Chicago House, 1931–

The construction of a new Chicago House on the east side of the Nile (fig. 12.1) was motivated by a number of factors. The most important was the ongoing disputes over the land on which the old house stood, only part of which belonged to the University of Chicago. As Breasted wrote, "The fact that we do not own all the land on which our Medinet Habu Headquarters stands [has] made it evident that we cannot retain the Medinet Habu building as a permanent home of the Oriental Institute."[1] Buying other land adjacent to the existing house was not an option, however, and in late 1928, Nelson wrote that they had given up trying to acquire land there because "we would probably not continue to occupy the present house for many seasons more."[2] Additional problems included the fouled well that created constant illness among the staff, the white ant infestation, and the problems and costs of commuting to Luxor.

In February 1929, Breasted asked Nelson to send him sketch plans of what he thought a new headquarters might comprise. Moving to the east bank was not yet a foregone decision, for Nelson reported that he had "found a very pleasant site for us on this side of the river if we should wish to stay here."[3] But a site "near Karnak" also was being considered, and Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "After further consideration, I have concluded that we must not make a move to Karnak till we have put definitely in writing the reasons pro and con for such a move. . . . I am trying to draw up a statement on that subject and shall have it in the Director's hands before he leaves for America." For most of 1929, Nelson did not even think a move was imminent: "That event cannot take place for two or three years at soonest or even later."[4] As late as October 16, 1929, Nelson was writing, "I only hope we shall have enough opportunity to work on the east side of the river to justify the buildings."[5]

Charles Breasted was very involved in the planning and construction of the new headquarters, his father playing a less active role this time. The end of February saw the younger Breasted in Cairo meeting with a Mr. Muller of the Egyptian Hotels Company, who was in charge of building the new wing of the Semiramis Hotel, to discuss materials and finishes. Breasted assured

Entrance to the residence of Chicago House, 1931. Photo: H. Leichter.

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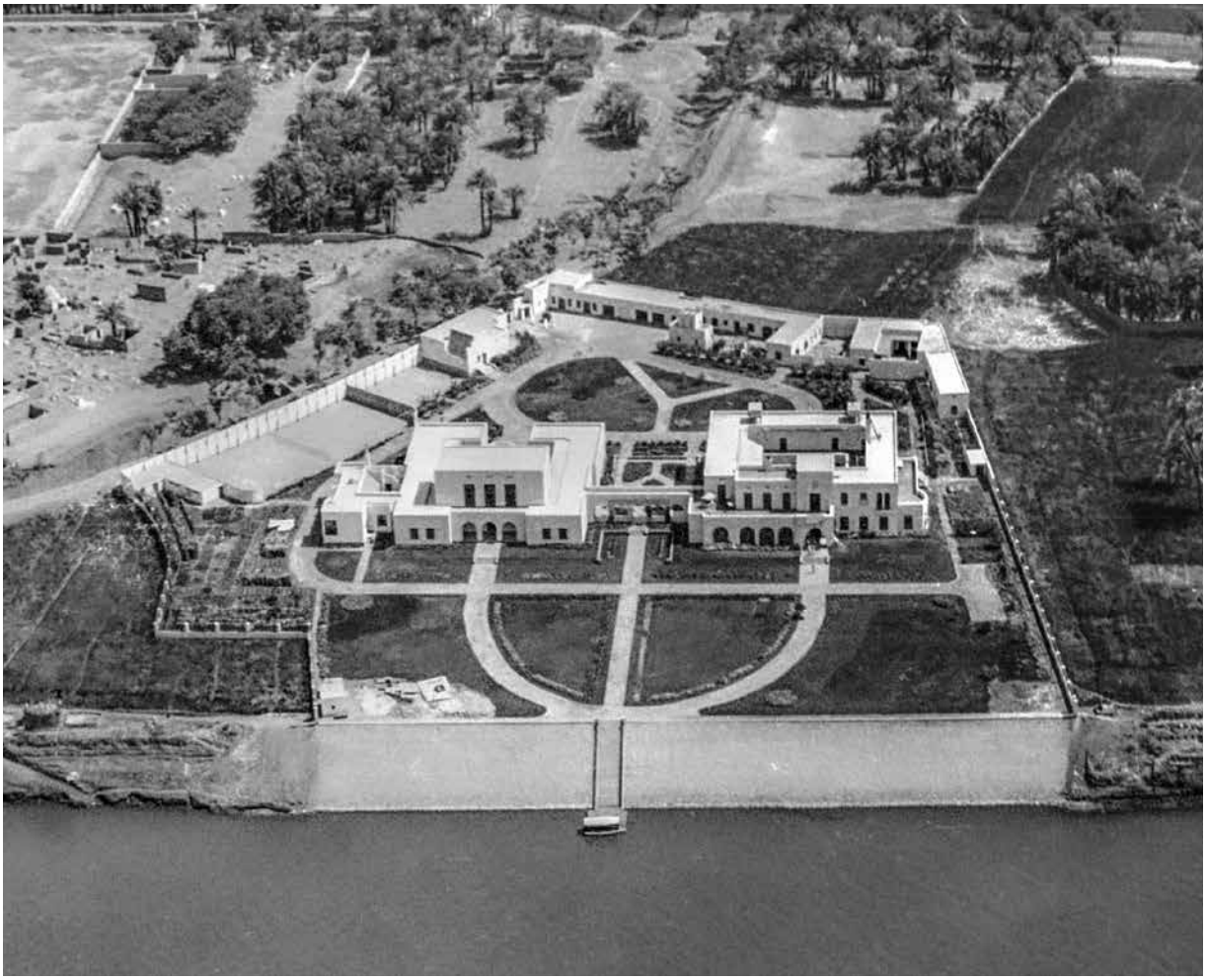

Figure 12.1. Aerial view of Chicago House, 1933. Photo: ISAC Museum Archives.

Nelson, "I shall continue to examine new buildings, either finished or in process, in Cairo, and in every way to get data of probable use to us."[6] He advocated for a "Spanish tone" for the new headquarters, partly because it would "entirely do away with the nuisance of European wooden sash and fittings, which are such a trial to one's temper."[7] Architect Laurence Woolman later wrote, "A California-Spanish style was chosen as a complement to the palm groves found along the Nile riverfront at Luxor."[8]

By spring 1929, the decision had been made to move to Luxor on the east bank, and events progressed very quickly. John D. Rockefeller Jr. (referred to as "Junior" in the correspondence) donated $110,000 for the building,* its furnishing, landscaping, and the enclosure wall, and the University of Chicago authorized $30,000 for land acquisition.[9] Rockefeller was so interested in the project that he made suggestions such as adding bedrooms to the preliminary plan. Breasted was confident in "Junior's" support, writing, "I think we need not feel much concern regarding the necessary funds."†

* Approximately $2 million in 2024.

† The house alone consumed the entire budget, and an additional $30,000 was needed for the project (Nelson to C. Breasted, 8 October 1931, CHP 1054).

Just as the purchase of property for the first house was shrouded in secrecy to avoid revealing that the Rockefeller Foundation was funding the Oriental Institute's purchase, so too were the 1929 transactions conducted through third parties and communicated in code.* The land on the east bank was purchased by Mr. Henry from Vacuum Oil Company in Cairo, a firm closely aligned with (and formerly owned) by Rockefeller's Standard Oil.† As Charles Breasted explained, "This consideration led us to ask Junior's office to have the Cairo company take care of the entire matter, thus avoiding the necessity for authorizations which might call attention to the transaction. When we have made all house plans and let all contracts, we can then take over the property."[10] Although the transfer from a third party would incur a 3.5 percent transfer tax by the Egyptian authorities, "I feel sure, it will be more than compensated for by the saving we can effect on our contracts by having the whole transaction confidential."[11]

The land selected was on the river between Karnak and Luxor Temples. At the time, it was mainly barley fields owned by four heirs of the original owner. As negotiations for its purchase proceeded, confusion arose when the Luxor municipality planned to build a 30-meter-wide road along the river between both temples.‡ There is a reference to the road project in April 1929, well before they bought the property, and in December 1931 they bought additional land as a contingency for the lost footage.[12] Because Nelson was skeptical that the project would actually be implemented, he inquired whether the entire plot (including the route for the road) could be enclosed—the first step in building and obtaining a permit to build. When the land purchase was registered, they found that the dimensions had been changed to accommodate the road, and the former owners had compensated Chicago with an equal amount of land to the south. Nelson reported with satisfaction, "The result of this situation is that we now have a compact block of land, almost square, with full three and a half *feddans* area, out of which nothing has to be taken for the road. It will give us a large tract, larger than we counted on."§

The next step was to obtain the building permits. First, Nelson had to forward the plan to the land registry office and ask for permission to enclose the property; if all was "correct," the permission would be granted. No permit was needed for the building itself, only for the "inclosing."[13] Another important issue was the location of the cesspit, which according to local regulations had to be at least 33 meters from the Nile. It was placed a very safe 75 meters from the shore. The city engineer also informed Nelson that the river-road project was proceeding that summer, and accordingly the proposed front line of the new headquarters had to be moved to the east. The river road did have an unforeseen benefit for Chicago: a triangle of land just to its north created by the replanning would be developed as a public garden, which "ought to be distinctly to our advantage" because another building could not be constructed there.[14] Other important news was that Chicago House would not be permitted to have its own water or electrical systems (as it had wished), but those services would be provided by the municipality; that issue would be resolved in Chicago House's favor.[15]

News that Chicago was building another, more permanent headquarters was viewed with

* *Bentley's Complete Phrase Code* was used again, operated with varying patterns that the parties specified, such as, "I suggest we use 4 down." A copy of the codebook was given to Vacuum Oil in Cairo. The *Bentley* code was used well into the 1930s.

† C. Breasted to Nelson, 2 May 1929, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1681. In 1931, Vacuum Oil merged with Standard Oil of New York (Socony), which later became Mobil and then ExxonMobil (Wikipedia, accessed August 19, 2023). Vacuum Oil also purchased the land for the Gourna Chicago House.

‡ This was part of £E100,000 project for "improvements at Luxor" (Nelson to Breasted, 17 April 1929, CHP 1676). The road was not built until fall 1932.

§ Nelson to C. Breasted, 28 February 1930, CHP 386. The final purchase was 3.5 acres, with 350 feet of river frontage (*The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 3rd ed., 19).

suspicion. It also coincided with Chicago's request to work at Karnak and at Saqqara. Nelson observed to Charles Breasted,

> We are bound to be subjected to severe criticism by our European friends, who never saw such an establishment in connection with their Egyptian undertakings. While we can afford to ignore to a certain extent what will undoubtedly be the result of jealousy and misunderstanding, we must avoid any just criticism of the diversion of funds that should be used for our scientific work into channels that are non-productive. I heard this last summer that we are overstaffed. I do not understand just why the criticism is made, and I believe it emanated from an Egyptologist who was a guest at our house this past winter, but we must not give any just grounds for criticism. But we must not give the impression of anything but a serious intent in what we are doing. Of all this you are as aware as I am, but I wanted to let you know how I feel about the new house.[16]

He elaborated that he envisioned "the new buildings [to] be as simple as possible without being barnlike. I want to have them designed for utility, with as little suggestion of any luxury as we can have. I do not want anyone on the staff to feel that it is another Winter Palace, with its air of vacation resort. We are in Egypt only for business and too much in the way of extras, or even comforts, works against the best good of the expedition."[17]

Charles Breasted had a very different vision and priorities from Nelson's and no reticence about building the largest dig house in Luxor: "The new establishment is going to be perfectly beautiful, not only as a scientific headquarters but also as an architectural unit. There will be nothing like it in the whole Near East, and it will make the good old Chicago-House-by-the-Colossi look like thirty cents—and Metropolitan House like about seventeen!" (fig. 12.2).[18] He further told Nelson, "I agree with you absolutely about 'avoiding encouraging the spirit of leisure' in the design and equipment of our new house. I am confident we can, however, erect

Figure 12.2. Metropolitan House in western Thebes, ca. 1913. Photograph by Harry Burton, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Egyptian Art Archives (MM79400).

a structure, charming in appearance and comfortable in equipment, without in any way sacrificing efficiency. I do not believe it necessary to erect a painfully plain building merely to achieve a working spirit. The new plant will be more than ever an outpost of American scientific endeavor and we must set a tone not only of efficiency and scientific accomplishment, but of dignity and beauty as well."[19]

The elder Breasted more soberly commented to Cecil Firth at the Egyptian Museum: "Our permanent headquarters building will be situated at Luxor, as you know, and we shall then be in exactly the position of the French Institut and the German Institut, with a permanent headquarters controlling a group of field projects."[20]

The Building Plans

In May 1929, Breasted was in touch with the University of Chicago's architect, Emery B. Jackson, to design the new building. In June, however, Jackson informed Charles Breasted that he was too busy to lead the project, but he could serve as an advisor.[21] Charles turned to other staff. Just a month before, he had interviewed two architecture students, Leonard LeGrande (Ting) Hunter and Laurence Woolman of Philadelphia (fig. 12.3); he hired them in June. Hunter was sent to Luxor ostensibly to work with Uvo Hölscher, while Woolman was posted to the university's excavations at Megiddo.[22] But that summer, Breasted unexpectedly requested that they both come to Chicago to start designing the new house. They were paid $160 per month over the summer.[23] Hunter was appointed "architect in charge of actual construction."[24]

The plans for the buildings evolved as Nelson communicated his suggestions to Hunter, who, when not in Luxor or at home, lived at the Hotel Metropolitan in Cairo. Messieurs Meyer and Peterson of Vacuum Oil gave him a "cubicle" (presumably in their office) with a drafting table,[25] and Charles Breasted set up accounts with suppliers of drafting gear.

From his experience living in Gourna for the past six years, Nelson was clear about what he wanted and did not want. Libbie Nelson also made many suggestions and requests based on her years of managing the house. By mid-July 1929, the senior Breasted had been presented with six "schemes" drawn up by Hunter and Woolman. All of them show the compound divided into sections with the residence and library wings on the west of the property facing the Nile. Schemes 1 (fig. 12.4), 2 (fig. 12.5), and 4 (fig. 12.6) have two service buildings (garages/workshops/storage and "servants'" quarters/laundry) to the east. Schemes 5 (fig. 12.7) and 6 (fig. 12.8) combine the service areas into one building. In all plans, the service areas are separated from the residence and library by a large garden that also functions as a discreet drain field.

Most of the proposals show the residence as a square building with a central courtyard. Scheme 5

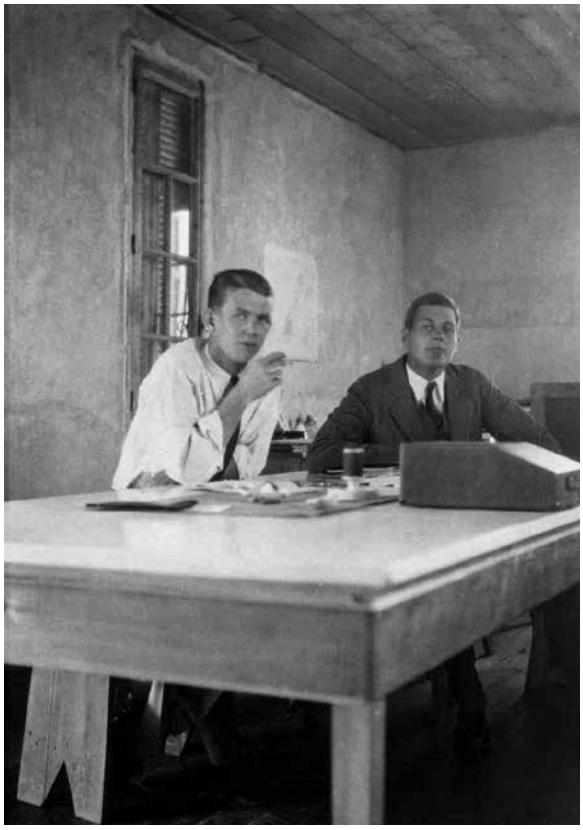

Figure 12.3. Architects Leonard LeGrande (Ting) Hunter and Laurence Woolman at the old Chicago House while planning the new house, ca. 1930. Photo: Janet Woolman, Woolman Collection, ISAC Museum Archives.

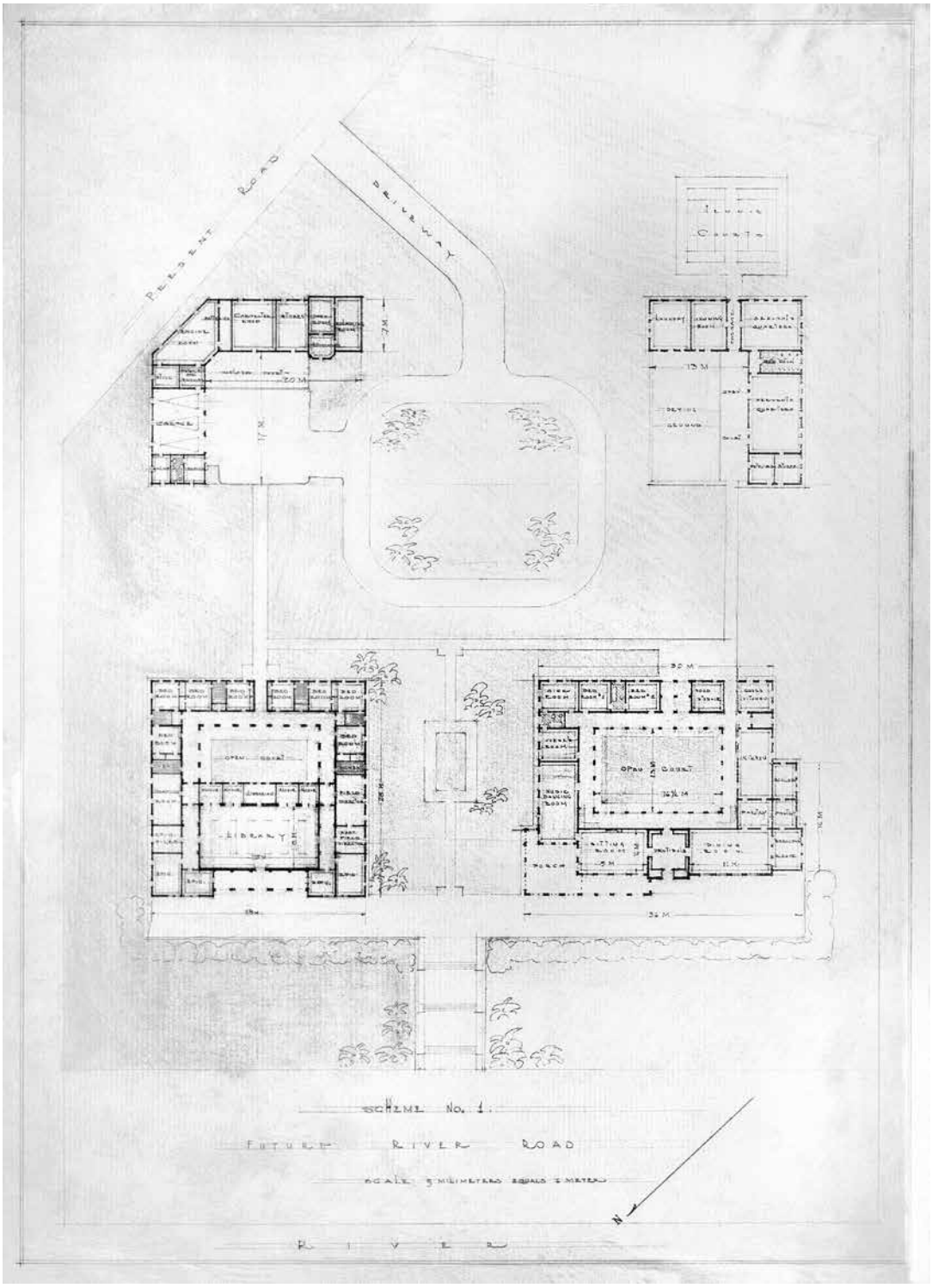

Figure 12.4. Scheme 1: The workshops and magazines are in two separate sections. The photo studio is the southernmost suite in the north group. The main floor of the residence wing is much as built, but widely separated from the library. The rooms around the library are also in approximately the same location as built, but the small rooms off the east of the library were changed. The tennis court, oddly, is behind the laundry and "servants'" quarters. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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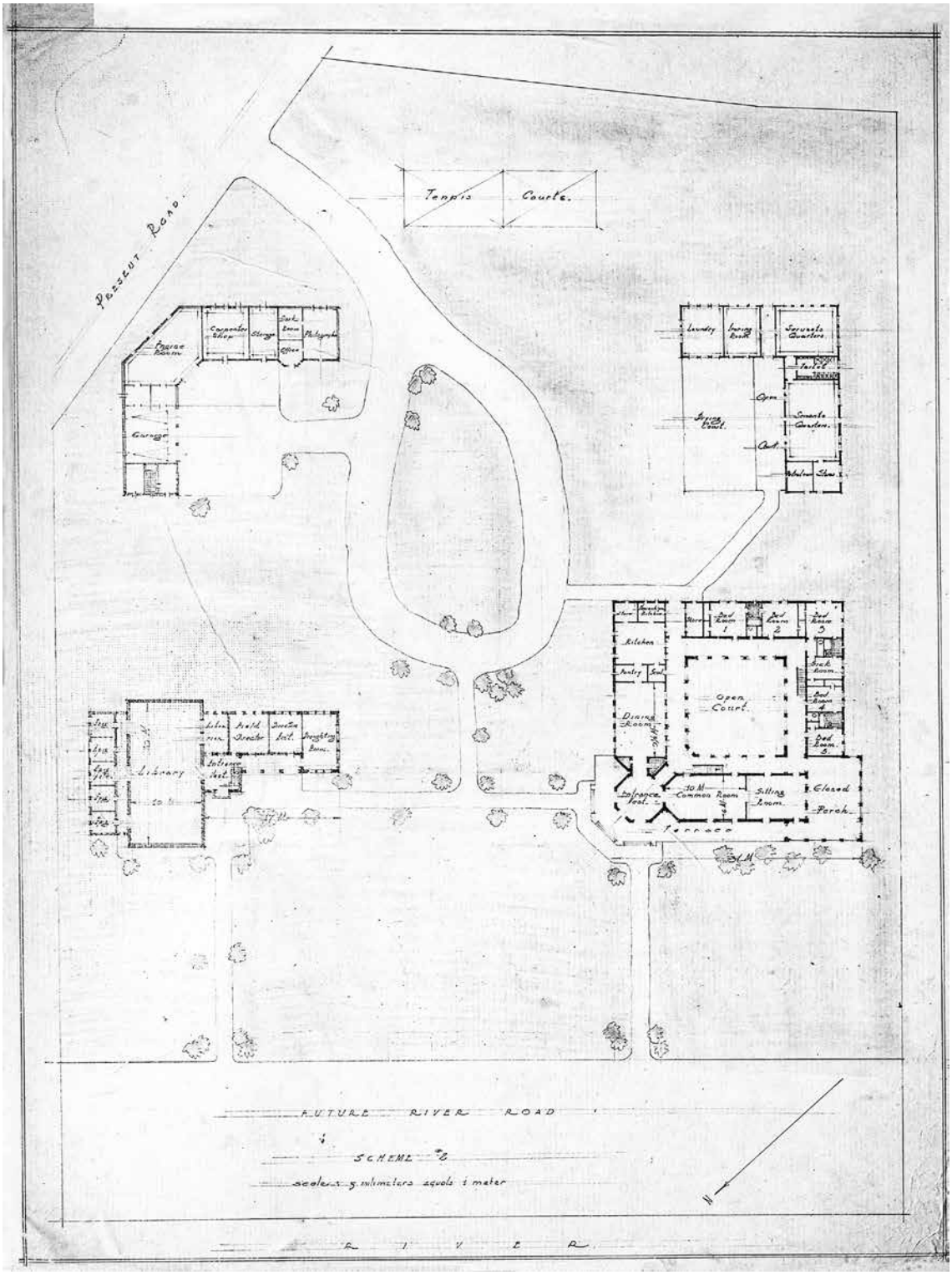

Figure 12.5. Scheme 2: The complex is divided into four sections. The photo studios are on the south end of the garage/carpenter shop. The residence wing's entrance is a towerlike structure. The kitchen and dining room are to the north. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

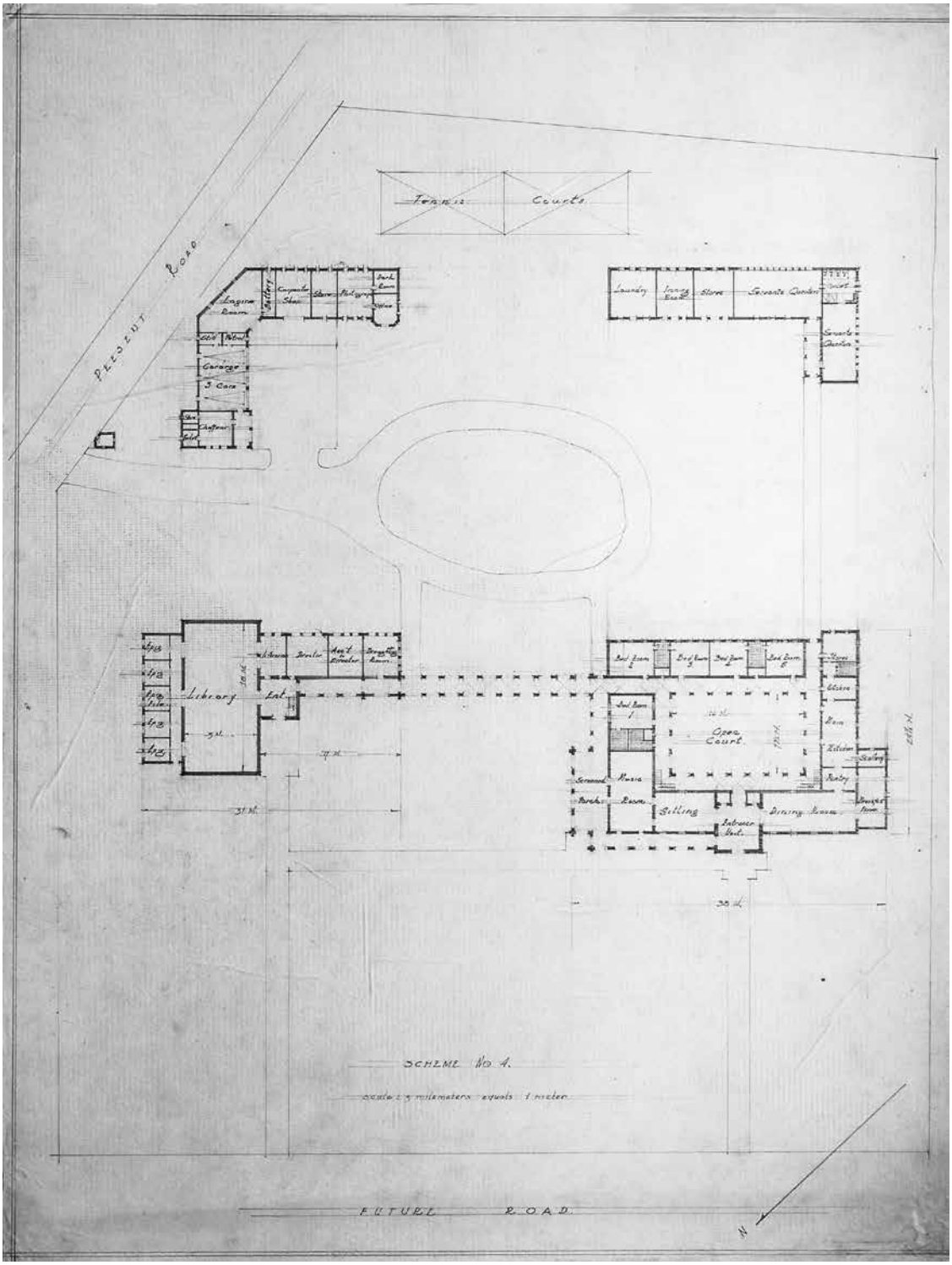

Figure 12.6. Scheme 4: The residence wing is much as built, although the passage from the arcade connecting with the library is to the east. The library is oriented east–west, and the offices to the south (field director's office, drafting room) are very small (the latter receiving no northern light), while the epigraphers' offices are lined up on the north side. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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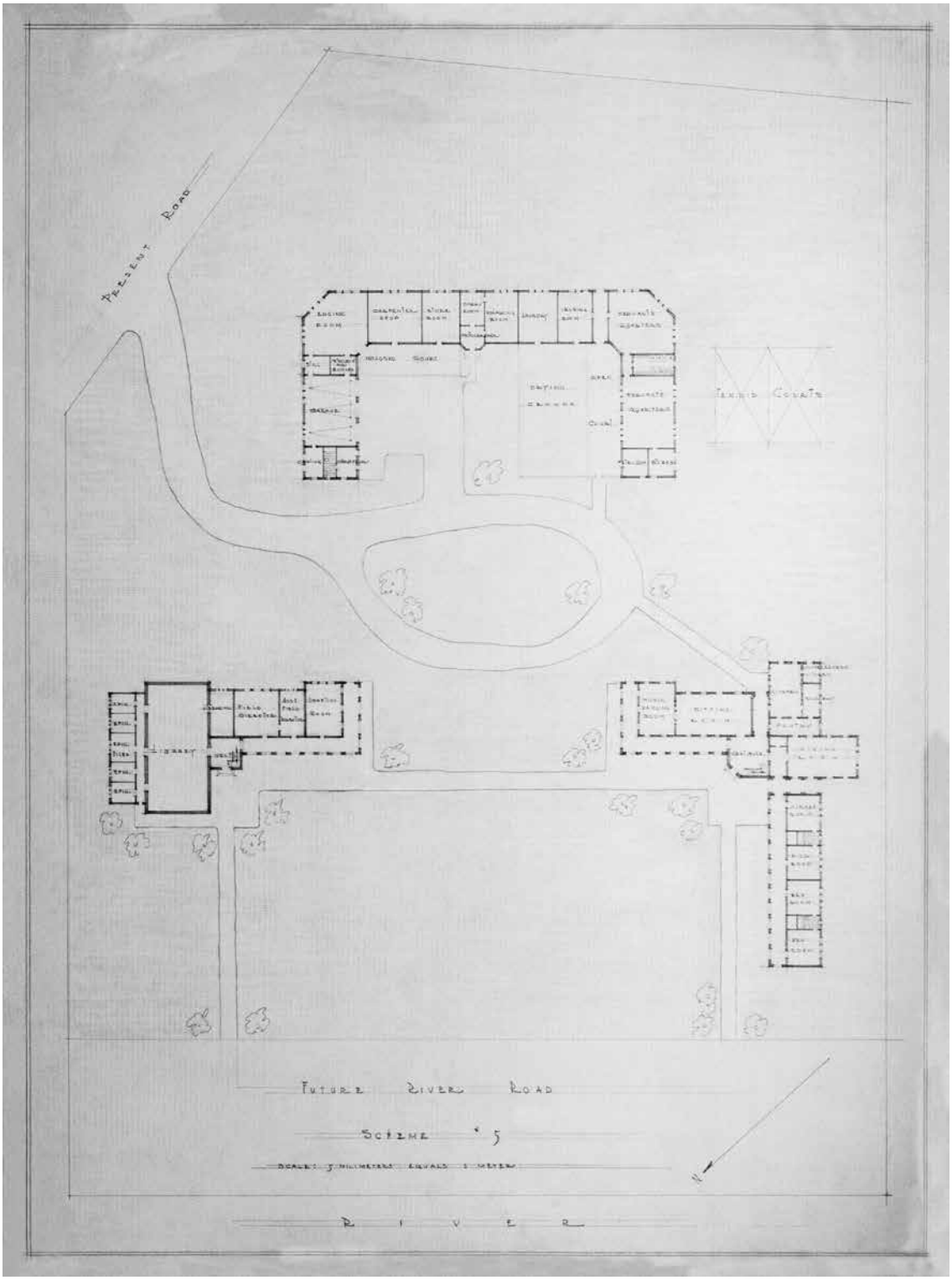

Figure 12.7. Scheme 5: The residence is a completely different configuration without a central court. Three bedrooms (and a "sick room") are in a line, oriented east–west. The food-service rooms are a separate group, as are the sitting and music rooms. A path leads to the library, much as in Scheme 4 (fig. 12.6). Image: Epigraphic Survey.

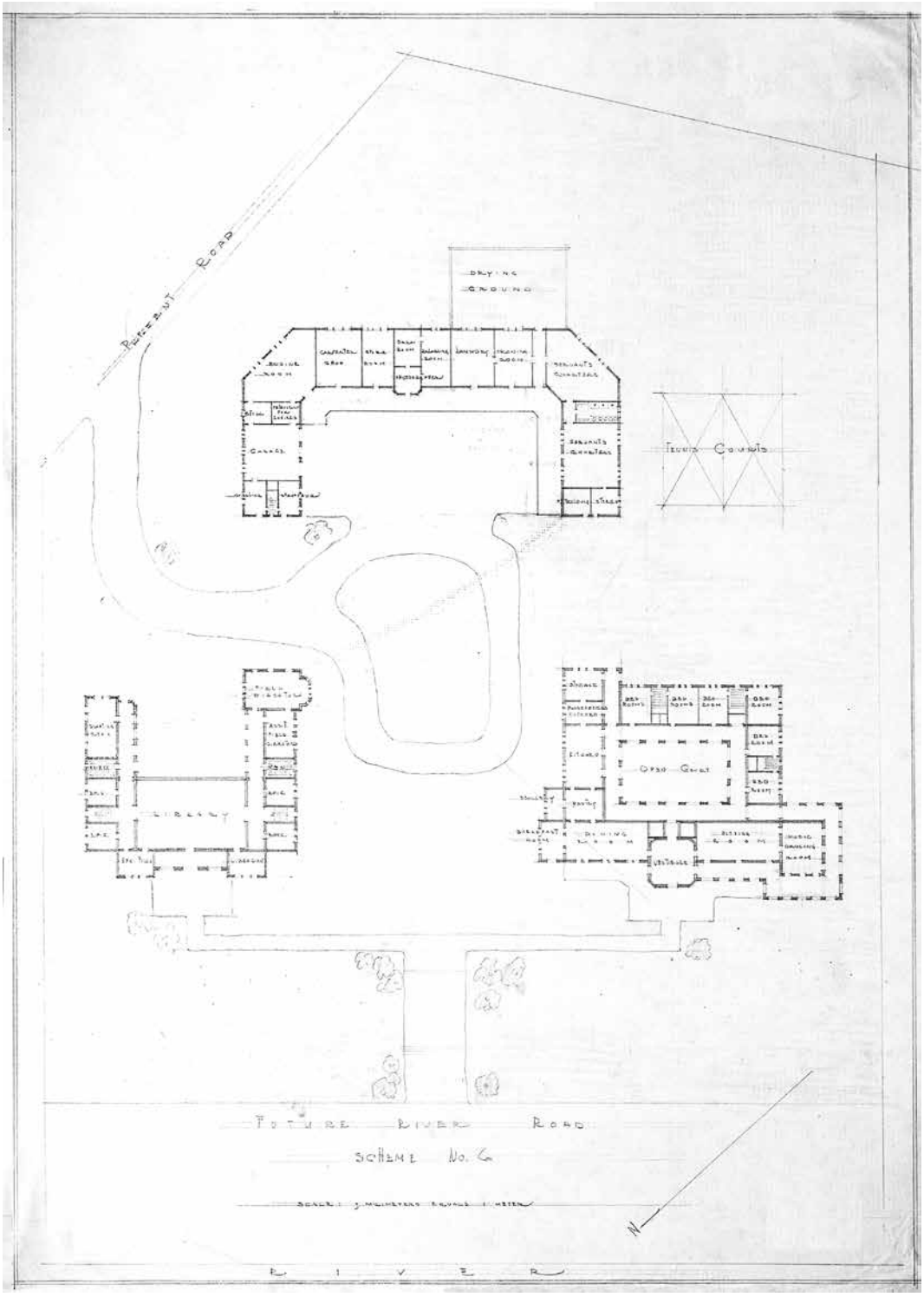

Figure 12.8. Scheme 6: The large laundry-drying ground has been shifted behind. In the residence wing, the kitchen and dining room have been moved to the north side, where they would be approached from the library. In the library wing, the field director's office has been moved to a large room in the rear; the drafting room is small, and there are no bedrooms on the ground floor. There is no arcade connecting the two main buildings. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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offered a more linear residence layout and dispensed with the court (see fig. 12.7). Scheme 2 included a tower-like corner entrance (see fig. 12.5).

There was considerably more variation in the plans for the library. Three of the proposals called for a rectangular library orientated east–west with artists' studios aligned to the library on the north and administrative offices in a line perpendicular to the library on the south (see figs. 12.5–12.7). Two others have the library oriented north–south with studios and offices flanking it and extending east to form a courtyard (figs. 12.8 and 12.9). Scheme 1 was entirely different, and closest to what was built, with the library surrounded by studios, offices, and bedrooms (see fig. 12.4).

Describing the house's overall idea, Charles Breasted noted that "the house will be very easy to keep clean, and the physical lay-out will be the last word in convenience. Bathrooms will be modern American units with built-in tubs. Water will be heated by the same type of heater we now use. The new scheme provides an average of about 24 or 25 bedrooms grouped in pairs with connecting bath."[26] Nelson, who had more experience, having been so intimately involved with every aspect of the first house, was concerned about Breasted's desire to have American-made bath fixtures because of their different specifications and the difficulty of repairing them.*

Between September and November 1929, a number of long letters from Nelson refined Hunter and Woolman's plans, molding them into a reality that one sees today. One of the first letters (September 22) asked for modifications to the administrative offices, which Nelson thought were "in the wrong place," in front of the building, commenting:

> The location assigned to them in the plan will of course, be convenient for seeing tourists. On the other hand, the main business of the offices is not with tourists, but with the business of the expedition. For instance, the Field Director's Assistant has constant business with servants, painters, carpenters, the guards, and such like. He takes the cooks' and buyers' accounts and has charge of the mail. He must be easily accessible to such persons at all times. According to the plan those individuals can get at him only by coming around the front of the house and going through the house along the hall by the Library. It is certainly not desirable that most of them should enter the house, nor is it desirable that they make use of the Loggia before the Library. I put his office and mine also at the back of the house just for this reason.[27]

He also objected to the size of the drafting room. The room at the Gourna house was 8 meters long, but Hunter's plan reduced the length to 6.75 meters. Nelson pointed out, "It will be impossible for six men to work in the room as it is now designed. Moreover, should architects also be working there, the difficulty will be increased." He asked that the length be increased to 14 meters. This issue was not fully resolved in the plans and needed to be adjusted after the building was completed. Other issues included the photo file room being too small, the entrance passage to the residence too narrow, the kitchen lighting inadequate, and the linen closets too few. Nelson was a pleasant and collaborative man, so it not surprising that his letter, with so much substantive criticism of Hunter's design, was prefaced with the encouraging comment: "The buildings, as designed, are extremely attractive and ought to be a delight to all. In view of the success of the planning done at Chicago, I hesitate to make radical changes, but certain modifications are necessary."[28]

Three weeks later, another list arrived from Nelson with comments about Scheme 5 (see fig. 12.7) that included: "The present plan of having the entrance to the residence building from the

* The fixtures actually purchased were designed by Standard Sanitary Manufacturing in Pittsburgh but made in Germany—"the identical equipment I [Charles Breasted] have looked at here in Chicago" (C. Breasted to Nelson, 15 July 1929, CHP 327).

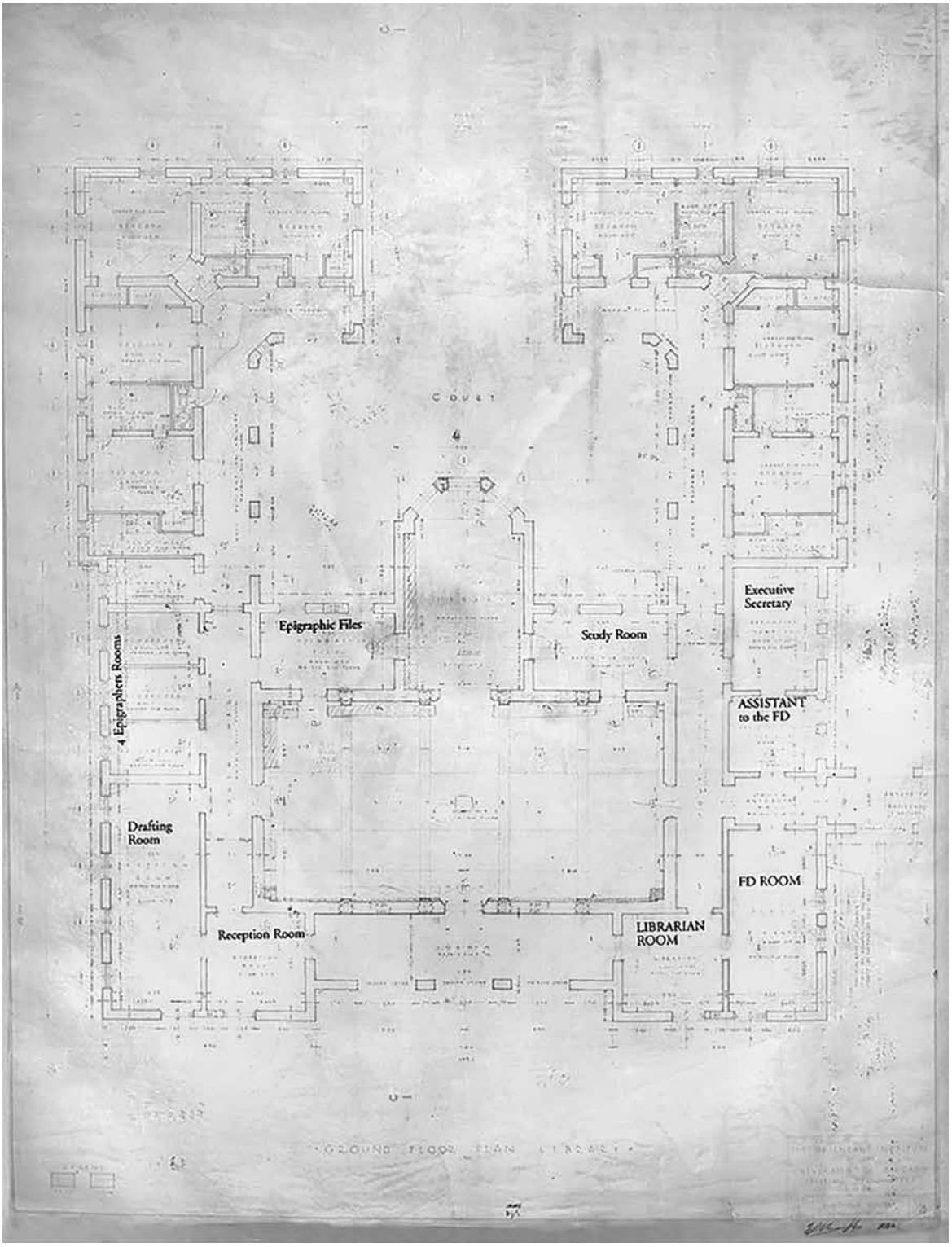

Figure 12.9. Library wing, Plan B: The field director's office is approached through the librarian's office. The larger drafting room has been moved to the west with the four epigraphers' offices. The corridor between the bedrooms that leads to the garden has been widened. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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Library building run through the sitting room or music room does not seem a good one. Men come back from work in their drafting room in all sorts of costumes and it is not a good thing to have them passing through the porch and sitting room where visitors may be gathered." Nelson suggested "cutting off a portion of the nurse's room, which is unnecessarily large, and making it into an entrance passage.* Also it would be well . . . to move eastward the connecting passage between the two buildings so that it will join up with the passage . . . thus giving access to the residence building through some other entrance than the front porch or sitting room." Other items included increasing the size of the "ladies dressing room," adding an outside entrance to the kitchen, and increasing the depth of the clothes closets.[29]

In early November, Nelson, working with a Plan A that was sent from Chicago, submitted his changes as Plan B (see fig. 12.9). The overall "outline" of the buildings was generally settled, with a few changes, including moving the arcade that connected the two structures a half meter to the east. The biggest change was to the dimensions of the library itself. Nelson suggested that it be widened by 1 meter, based on the dimensions of the existing bookshelves (which numbered thirty-eight, with two more to acquire), folio cases (seven, with an additional one to be purchased), and desks, all of whose projected locations he indicated on the plan. He suggested placing some of the bookcases perpendicular to the wall because "cases so placed are much freer from insects than are those that stand against the wall." The area at the east end of the library was simplified and the four alcoves reduced to two.

The schemes for the upper floor of the residence wing presented in July 1929 offered various options, with the number of bedrooms varying from eleven to sixteen and having different arrangements of baths. Most plans showed bathrooms placed between bedrooms, but Scheme 2 (fig. 12.10) showed eight bedrooms with shared baths, the other eight sharing two large bathrooms "down the hall." That one also featured an unfortunate octagonal "sewing and children's room" on the northwest corner that would have looked like a turret from the exterior and also created awkward angles in the adjacent bedrooms. All the schemes show the field director's suite on the southwest side of the building (figs. 12.11 and 12.12) except Scheme 2 (fig. 12.10), which lacks any room for the director. They also all included a "sewing and children's room" on the west side of the building. As built, this room was moved away from the bedrooms and put on a third floor with its own large patio.

Initially, Nelson wanted a second story on two sides of the library to accommodate the drafting room and additional bedrooms. He favored that location for the studios "because in its elevated position, it would collect less dust from the road and have more daylight."† Scheme 3 (fig. 12.13) shows eight bedrooms of equal size, four to the north and four to the south, all of which shared two bathrooms at the end of the corridor to the west. The baths awkwardly protruded from the face of the west facade. Staircases were situated between the bathrooms and the westernmost bedrooms. Scheme 6 (fig. 12.14) shows three bedrooms on the north and four to the south, but the easternmost on the south is much larger and has a bay window. By November 1929, the plan of having an upper floor on the library was abandoned because Nelson then suggested that the bedrooms be moved to the ground floor northeast and southeast of the library, so the library would still open onto "free space."‡

* The "nurse's room" was indicated only on Scheme 5 when the residence was a linear plan. On that plan it appears next to the "sick room" and two bedrooms (fig. 12.7).

† None of the known plans show the drafting rooms on the second floor.

‡ As built, the library opens onto a small court. The bedrooms to the east of the library are dark and do not receive much sunlight, and so were dubbed the "death suites" because they were so cold. In the 1992 renovation, the one in the northeast corner was turned into archival storage, taking advantage of the lack of heat and light.

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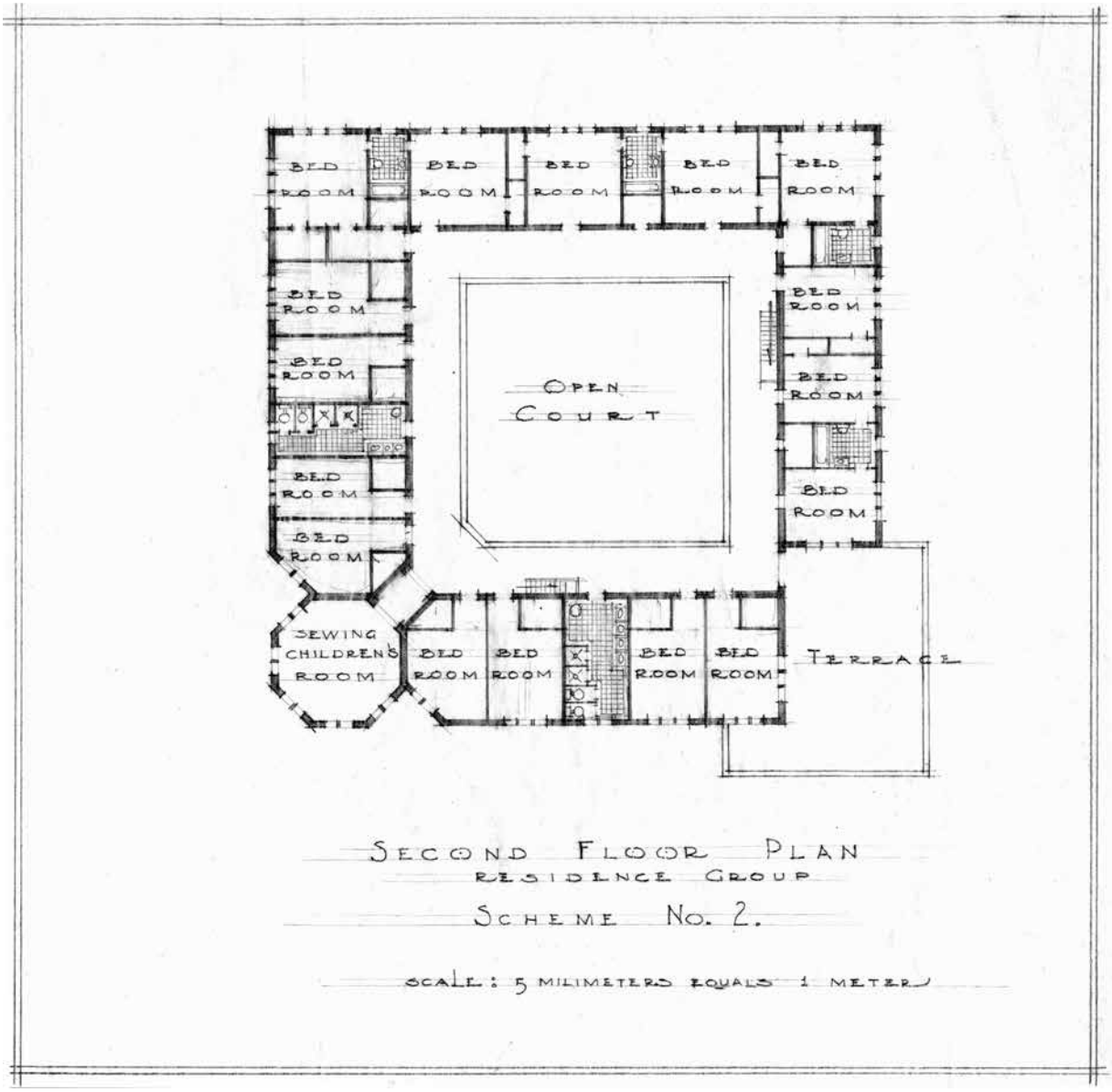

Figure 12.10. Scheme 2, upper floor: There is no designated field director's suite; the sewing and children's room is in the tower, and only half of the bathrooms are en suite. The only exterior space is the large terrace on the southwest. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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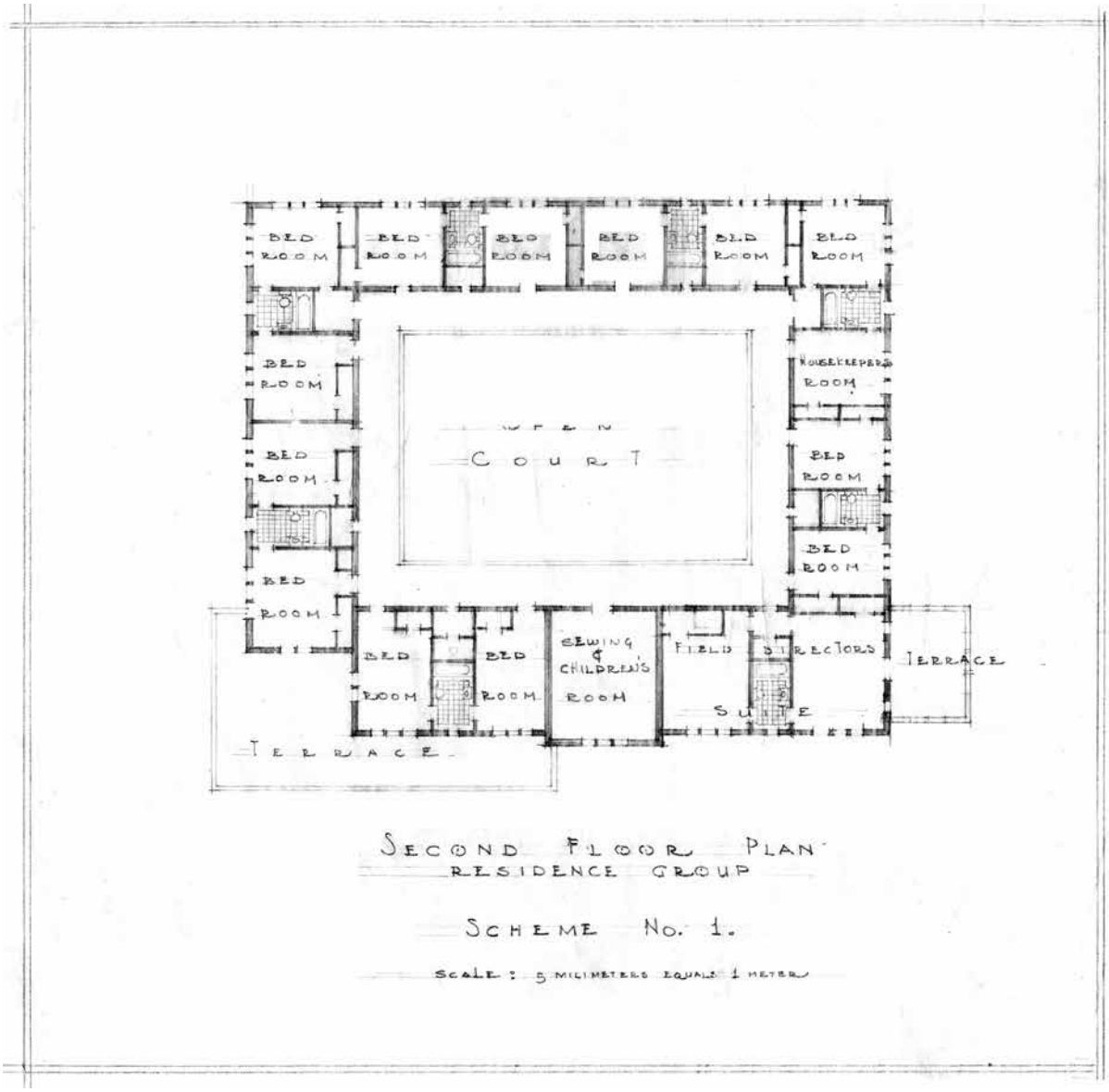

Figure 12.11. Scheme 1, upper floor: The field director's suite is to the southwest with a private terrace. The thirteen bedrooms (and the housekeeper's room) are separated by baths, allowing them to be configured as suites. The sewing and children's room is on the west. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

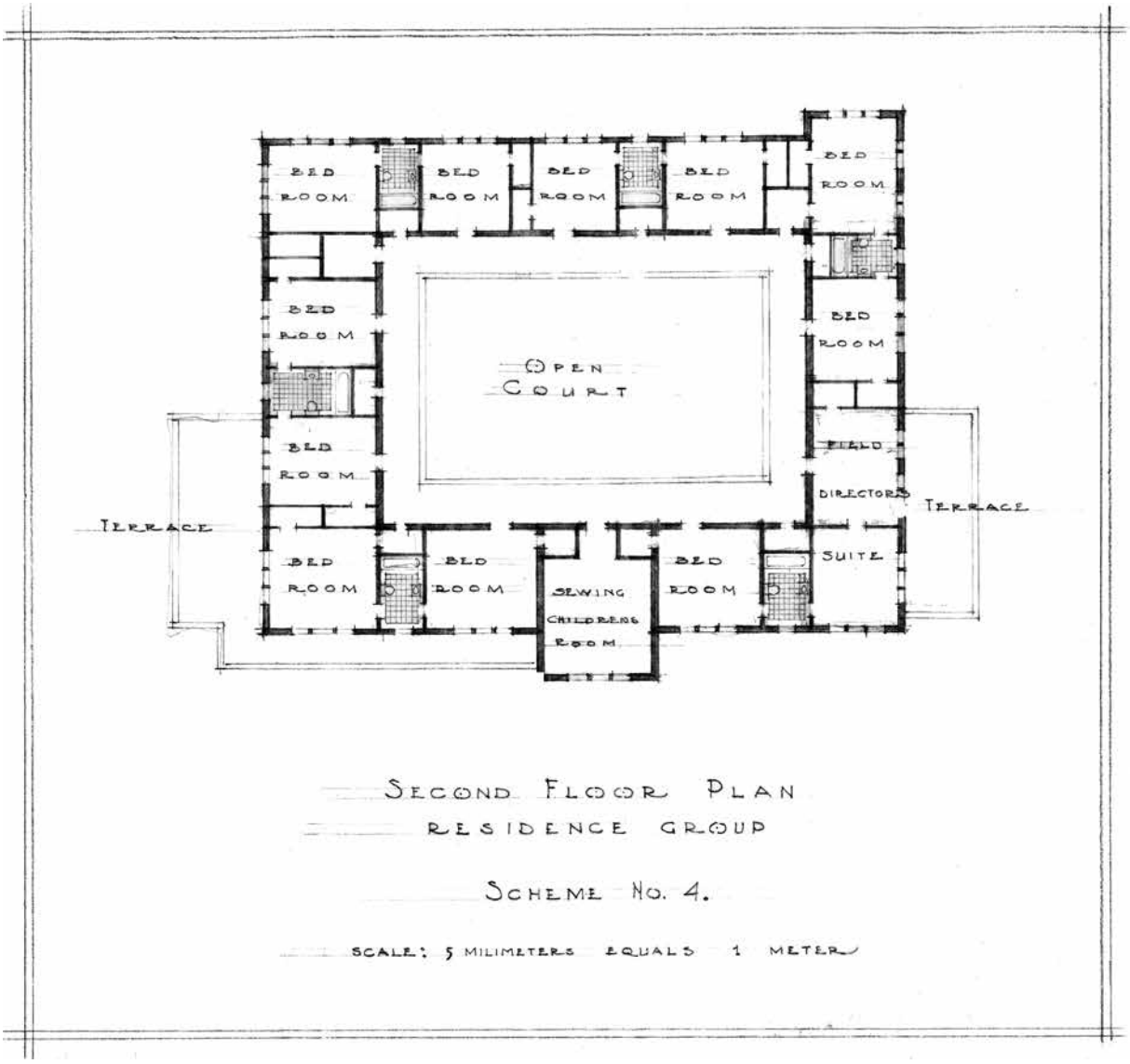

Figure 12.12. Scheme 4, upper floor: This version is much like Scheme 1, with the field director's suite on the southwest with a large terrace. There are now eleven bedrooms that could be configured as suites, each with a bath between the bedroom and a sitting room. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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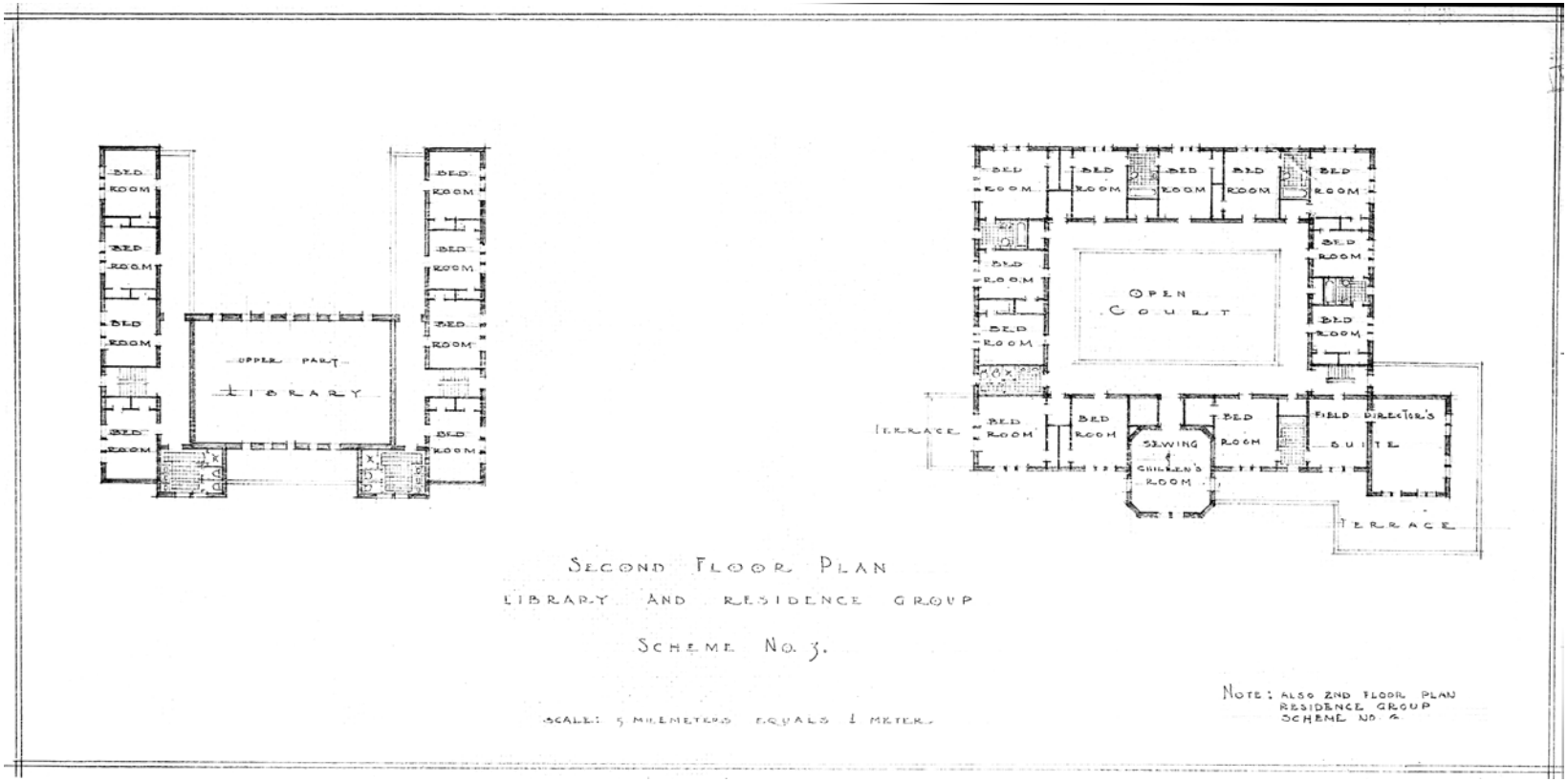

Figure 12.13. Scheme 3, upper floor: The field director's suite is on the southwest with a large, shared terrace; most of the bathrooms are en suite. The library has eight bedrooms on the upper floor, with two shared bathrooms that project from the west facade. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

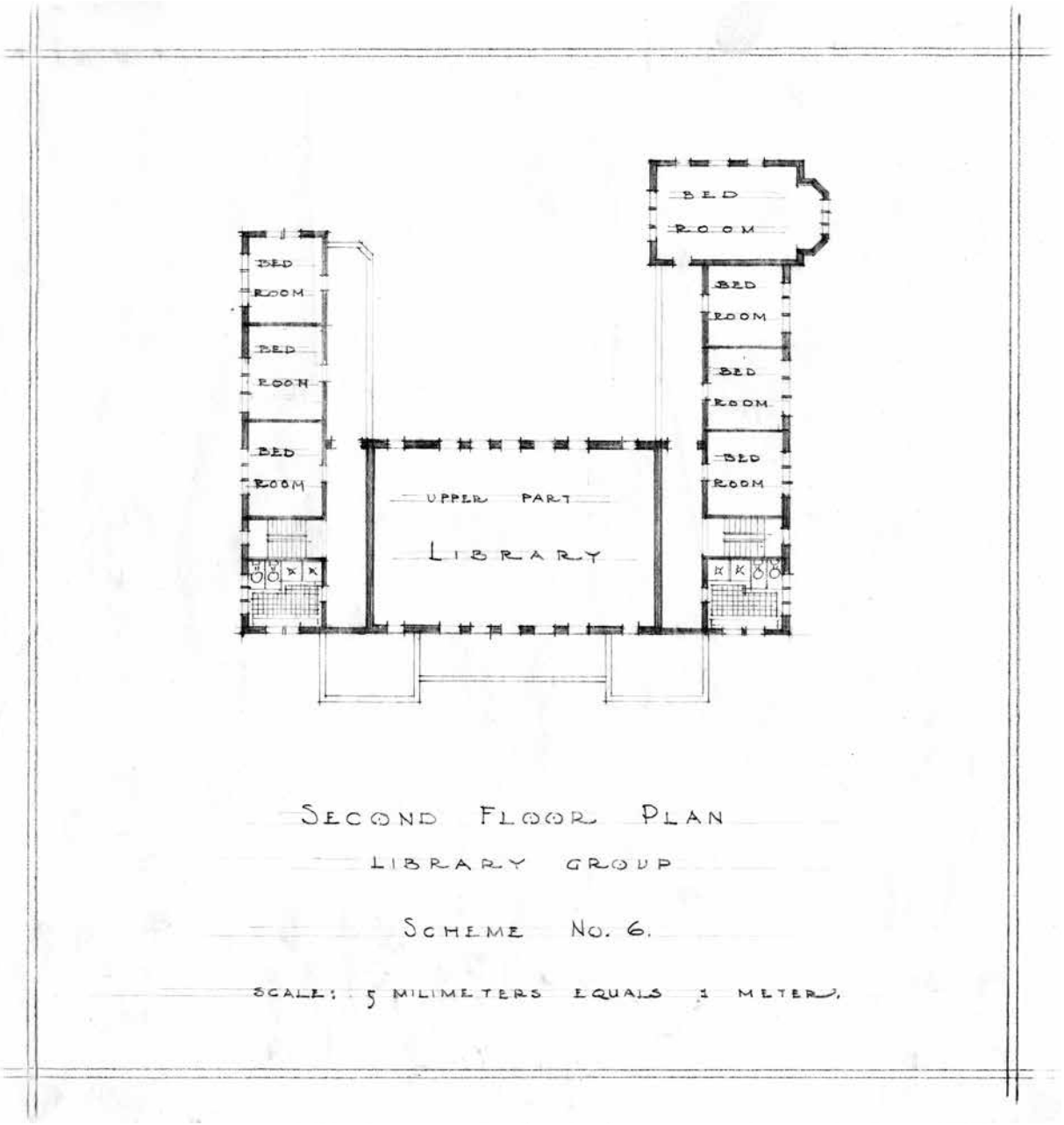

Figure 12.14. Scheme 6: Upper floor of the library with bedrooms to the north and south. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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He also suggested that the drafting room be larger and have better light.[30]

His experience with the Gourna house gave him definite opinions about the arrangement of the administrative offices. He enlarged the librarian's office and relocated it so she could see incoming visitors, be near the field director, and "pound her typewriter without too much great offense to readers." In Plan A (fig. 12.15), the office of the assistant to the field director was still in the front of the building, although Nelson had objected to this placement in his September comments. Again, he said it should be placed in the back of the building to avoid having the tradesmen and local workmen on the loggia and walking through the library. This attitude of separating the locals from the (mainly Western) scholars was a consistent pattern in the planning, effectively making "the help" invisible. Nelson suggested that what was a file room on Plan A should be turned into a reception room for visitors including the *omda* (mayor) and other "native visitors."

The relocation of the bedrooms to the east of the library was approved by the elder Breasted and added to the master plan in November. Nelson commented, "I think it is a distinct improvement. With oleanders or flowers against the rear of the Library and a shrub or two in the court to either side, the effect as one approaches the rear of the building would be very pleasing."[31] In another letter, just a few days later, Nelson confirmed the enlargement of the library and the relocation of the administrative offices, and suggested that the two wings created by the bedrooms could be closed by a metal security grille that could be locked in summer, noting that "if a few flowers or shrubs are planted in the court to the east of the library, they will give a pleasing effect as seen through the grill."*

Another modification was the location of the photo studio suite that, on some versions of the 1930 plan (fig. 12.16), was situated in the northeast corner of the complex adjacent to the garages. Another plan, also dated 1930 (fig. 12.17) but more sketchy, shows it in its present location on the north wall just east of the library. On that plan, the northeast corner is divided into storage and the carpenter's shop. It also reflects rethinking of the other magazines and work rooms. The four-bay garage is constant, but the carpenter's shop has moved from the south side next to the laundry to the north.

Security was also an important issue. Nelson wanted a house that was easily "defensible": "The building should be raised high enough above the surrounding land to prevent anyone in the garden from looking into the windows on the ground floor. I want to have one building, presumably the large living house, so arranged that it would be easily defensible. . . . Egypt is a very uncertain country as far as public order is concerned. . . . In the plan as I drew it the larger building was quite enclosed, and with an iron grill across the entrance to the courtyard, could be made easily secure."[32]

Charles Breasted reassured him with a long description of the security measures:

> Windows will have strong blinds of the roller type, as I have suggested in a previous letter; main entrance and important entrances will have heavy grilled iron doorways (which I think we can have built according to our own designs and specifications in Cairo by native smiths), and smaller back entrances, etc. will be supplied with heavy, possibly metal-covered doors. Without putting up a fortress, there is little more that we could do to render the residential unit any safer. If serious trouble broke out in Upper Egypt as a result of political contingencies which we cannot anticipate now, and vicious violence developed in Luxor, there is little we could do against a mob fully determined to raid our premises. The only defense would be rifles, and once we begin shooting, we would be playing a game the other side could play equally well.

* Nelson to C. Breasted, 10 November 1929, CHP 346. Tina Di Cerbo points out that it is unlikely this grille was ever installed, because the plantings would have needed maintenance in the summer.

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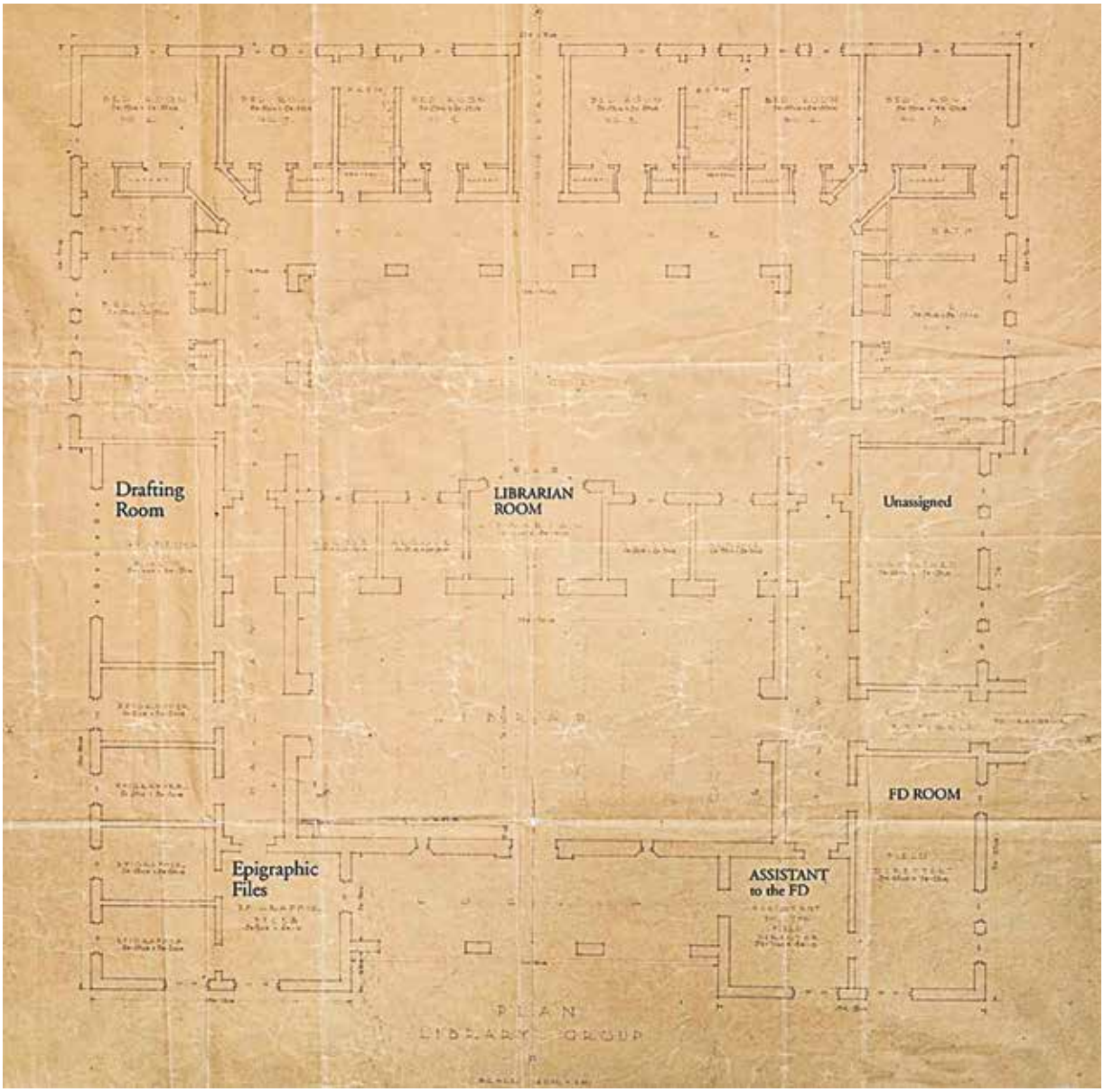

Figure 12.15. Library wing, Plan A: The offices of the field director and his assistant are in the southwest for easier access by visitors. Bedrooms surround the library, with only a narrow central exit passage to the east. The drafting room has northern light and is one large space. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

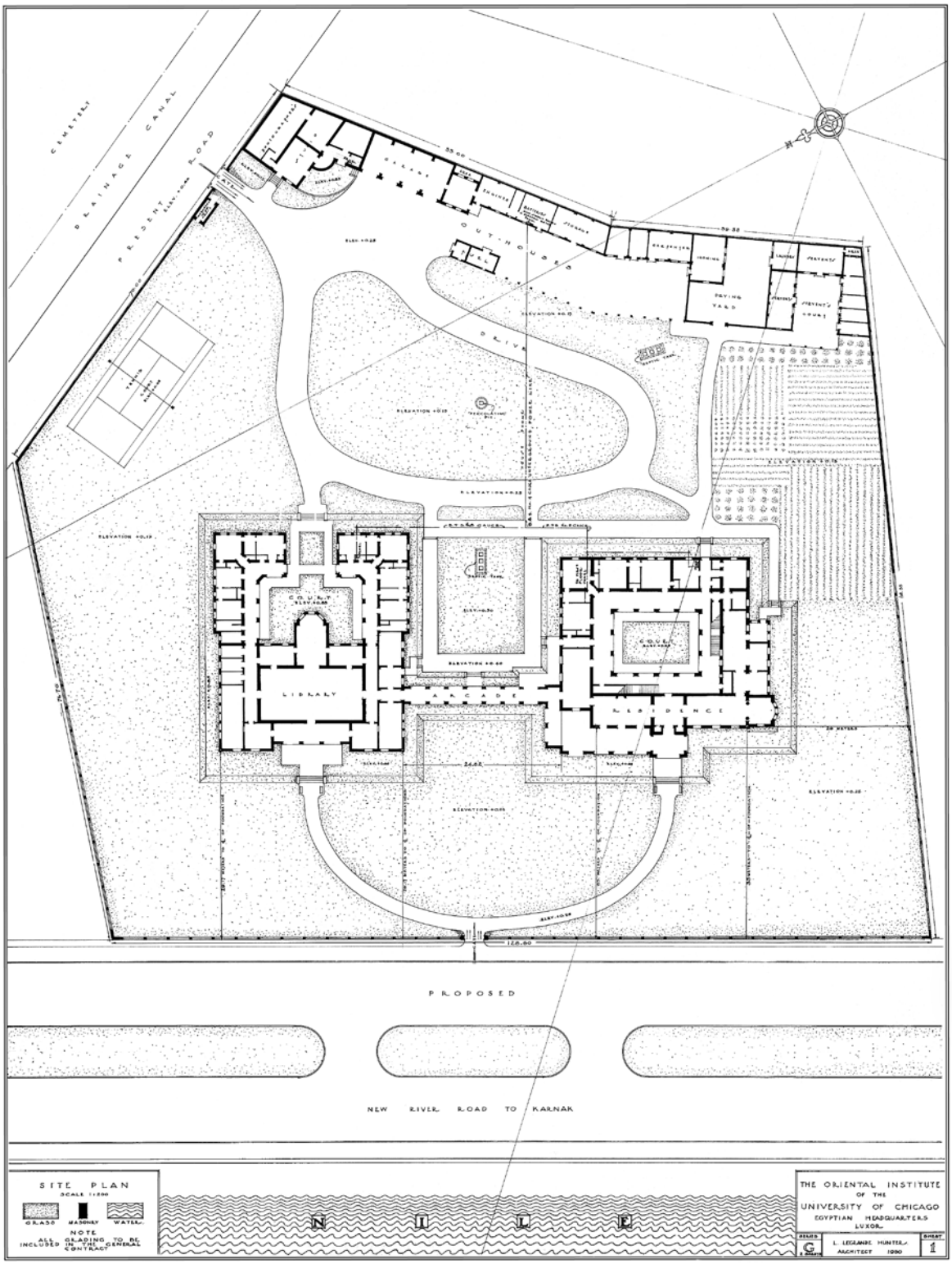

Figure 12.16. Plan of Chicago House nearly as built, dated 1930. A significant change is the location of the photo studio in the northeast corner of the complex adjacent to the garages. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

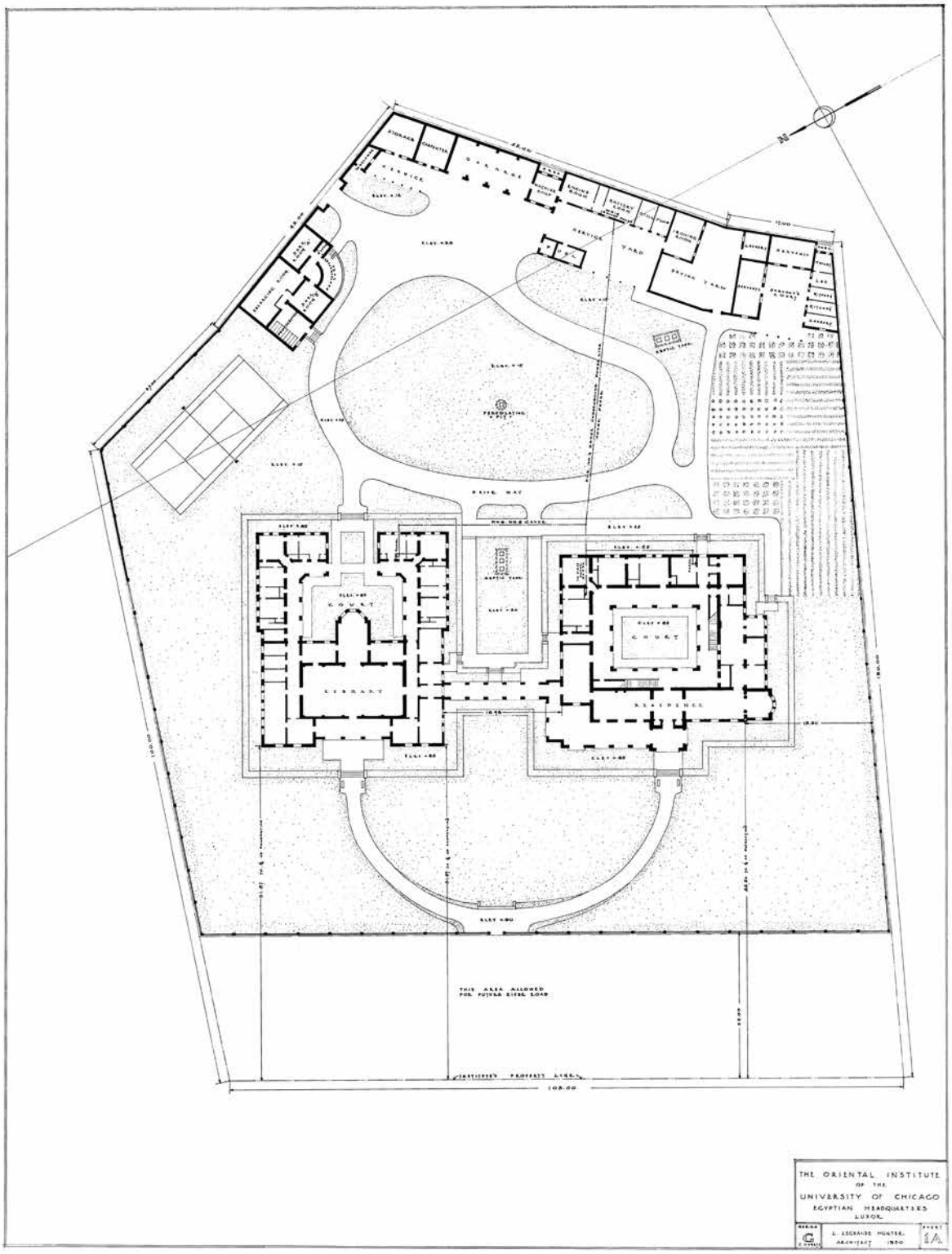

Figure 12.17. Plan of Chicago House as built, with the photo studio in the new location farther to the west, along the north wall, separated from the garages and work magazines. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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He ended in sobering terms:

> In other words, while I agree with you that we must make the place defensible up to a certain point, I take the attitude that the Institute's work not only in Egypt, but throughout the Near East contains a definite element of gambling. I assume that if trouble broke out in Egypt of a malignant nature which would threaten the very existence of our Luxor plant, we would have time to send our staff out of the country. All we could do would be to ask for government protection or British protection; or failing of this to surrender the whole show.[33]

Nelson looked forward to the new residence, writing that it would be a "great relief to get into a building that does not need constant repair."[34] As the building was finalized, Breasted wrote to Nelson, "You will soon be in charge of a delightful new home for our work in Egypt, an institution beautiful in architecture and inspiring in its achievements and future possibilities. I hope it will give you real and encouraging satisfaction—especially as you contrast it with your first winter at Medinet Habu!"[35] Nelson replied, "You must be enjoying the prospect of the new building and will watch it going up much as you would watch the growth of a beloved child. What a satisfaction the whole development of the Institute must be to you. It is a wonderful achievement."[36] The two had spent countless hours with every single detail of the first Chicago House, so they, more than anyone else, could appreciate how momentous it was to have another, more permanent headquarters.

Building the New Headquarters

Building the first Chicago House had placed an incredible burden on Nelson (and Mrs. Nelson), who coordinated every small detail with Breasted back in Chicago at the same time he was trying to get the scientific work started. This time around, Charles Breasted assured Nelson that he would not be placed in the same situation: "By a proper organization and correlation of the work, and by placing a good deal of responsibility on Hunter and possibly even on Woolman in case we need to borrow him from Megiddo, I believe you will be relieved of the major portion of the burden in connection with the construction of the house."[37]

Hunter assured Nelson that he would have information for the contractor's bids by the middle of February 1930. Arthur (Pecky) Callender, who had played a major (and not always helpful) role in the construction and renovation of the old Chicago House, including a possibly self-serving part in the land acquisition (see chapter 11, "Old Chicago House, 1924–1940"), "heard that they were going to build again [and asked] to be remembered in connection with the matter." Nelson "replied that I had been instructed definitely by the Chicago Office to place the contracts in the hands of some Cairo builder with proper shops and general equipment to undertake the work. . . . He will probably be more sore than ever, but what to do?"[38]

Messieurs Meyer and Peterson of the Vacuum Oil Company also gave advice about how to proceed.* After examining the plans, they too "reached the conclusion that the job was of more than sufficient size and importance to warrant our employing a general contractor to carry the burden of the whole job. He recommended an Englishman by the name of Brookes, whom Meyer has been using for some 2½ years and has found to be absolutely reliable." Charles Breasted had already received a reference for Brookes from Mr. Muller of the Egyptian Hotels Company, because Brookes had worked on the Semiramis Hotel project in Cairo. Breasted assured Nelson,

* Peterson also acted as "mechanical and structural advisory engineer" for the project, and he was to supply the "actual plans and blueprints of mechanical layout." Nelson and Charles Breasted were unhappy with his performance and his invoices for services that included architectural work, Breasted even making an aside: "But I am confident that if Mr. R., Jr., knew we were reimbursing Peterson, he would be troubled and displeased—and it might even result in retarding Peterson's advancement in the Company" (C. Breasted to Nelson, 2 October 1930, CHP 423).

> I have carefully thought over the whole problem of this new construction project and have come to the conclusion that whereas we might do the job a little more cheaply by ourselves acting as general contractors, we really do not possess the organization or the facilities and experience essential to do the job in a first class way. For the sake of the job, we must buy this service from someone upon whom we can absolutely rely. This will enormously simplify the problem and greatly lessen your burden in connection with it.[39]

The bid request for the job was subject to the same level of secrecy as the land acquisition had been. Mr. Stewart, Vacuum Oil's managing director, offered to "put the tenders for the bids as if they were for a job for the V. O. C. itself, which is likely to have a restraining effect on the bidders."[40]

Another issue was the extension of the Institute's permission to import "scientific equipment" without duty, a permission first granted in 1924 to "all materials we might have occasion to import in connection with the new project."[41] Charles Breasted took the lead, and in a letter to Nelson in December 1929, he related his exploits in successfully obtaining the document despite what he described as the bumbling efforts of Mr. Wadsworth at the Chancery and Mr. Destrologo at American Express. The younger Breasted, with his usual self-aggrandizing manner, described how Wadsworth, who "has been most kind and helpful," was stymied by the "ludicrous goings on" in the Chancery, so Breasted himself quickly dictated a revised letter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As for Destrologo, he could not find the original permit from 1924. Charles wrote, "I noticed the completely disorganized condition of the shipping department's files, but I observed merely that the latter ought never to have left the possession of the American Express Company, and that I must have at the earliest possible moment, either the original or certified copy." Shortly after Breasted arrived at his hotel, Destrologo followed with the original permit in hand, only to be lectured: "I took occasion to tell Destrologo that we expected to do an increasing amount of importing; that their Shipping Department files were in a lamentable state of disorganization and that he was to immediately secure as many alphabetical or other files as necessary properly to keep together all papers relating to [the] Oriental Institute's Luxor epigraphic shipments. This he cordially agreed to do, but I dare say nothing will come of it."[42]

Ground was broken in May 1930, and the completion date was set for May 1931.[43] The site of both buildings was graded to be several feet above the surrounding area, to give protection from a high flood and also to prevent people in the garden from peering into the bedrooms.[44] The house was built of fireproof fired brick and ferro-cement. Messieurs Nicholas Diab & Sons in Alexandria supplied the cement, but who actually built the house is unknown.

The New Headquarters

The new headquarters was composed of two buildings connected by an arcade, the north one primarily the library and offices, the south one the residence (fig. 12.18). A suite of magazines and workshops, and facilities for laundry, lined the east side of the property, separated from the main buildings by a large garden. The photo studio and tennis court lay along the north wall. The compound was surrounded by a wall, originally pierced with two gates. The one on the northeast side of the complex accessed the magazines and garages, led to the back of the house, and curved around the north side of the building to the front of the library and residence wings. The other was a river gate that gave access to a stairway down to a small dock on the Nile. All the buildings were finished with stucco and tinted a light yellow-tan. The two main buildings were fitted with tall, wood-framed windows covered with screens. Each window was equipped with a wooden roll-down shutter that was used to secure the property during the offseason. The large windows of the

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Figure 12.18. West face of Chicago House before landscaping, 1931. Photo: H. Leichter.

library and studios also had large wooden shutters that were manually placed in the window openings to secure the building.

The library wing housed the business functions of Chicago House. The main entrance was on the west, up several stairs onto a porch (fig. 12.19). The library measured about 16.5 × 9.0 meters and rose two stories with a flat ceiling with false vaults. A library annex extended east, with a view of the garden from three tall windows. The walls of the library were sparsely decorated with rectangular groups of tiles in Islamic-style geometric designs produced by Fourmaintraux & Delassus of Desvres in northern France (figs. 12.20 and 12.21). During the design phase, Hunter had suggested that "some sort of Egyptian head" be placed over the main doorways. Egyptologist Keith Seele suggested that they be "three heads of racial representations" such as those that appear at Medinet Habu. Nelson had artist Virgilio Canziani draw an Egyptian, a Nubian, and a Libyan that were then rendered in plaster. Nelson "secured the services of the most expert forger of antiquities in Kurna" to sculpt them in stone. It was initially planned that Canziani would paint them in oil—which, perhaps luckily for modern taste, he did not do. The medallions, each 60 centimeters in diameter, are positioned with the Nubian over the south door, the Libyan (figs. 12.21 and 12.22) above the north, and the Egyptian over the central (west) door.[45]

The field director's office and its reception area (fig. 12.23) were off the north end of the arcade that bridged the two parts of the house so that it was easily accessible to guests and officials without their having to traverse the library. To the west of these rooms was a large room for file storage. Corridors on the north and south sides of the library gave access to the offices on the south and to the studios and epigraphers' offices on the north. As built, the artists' studio was one long room in the northwest corner of the building, with the epigraphers' offices behind it (see fig. 12.19). This was one of the least

Figure 12.19. View of the arched entrance to the library wing, 1931. The artists' studios are to the left. Photo: H. Leichter.

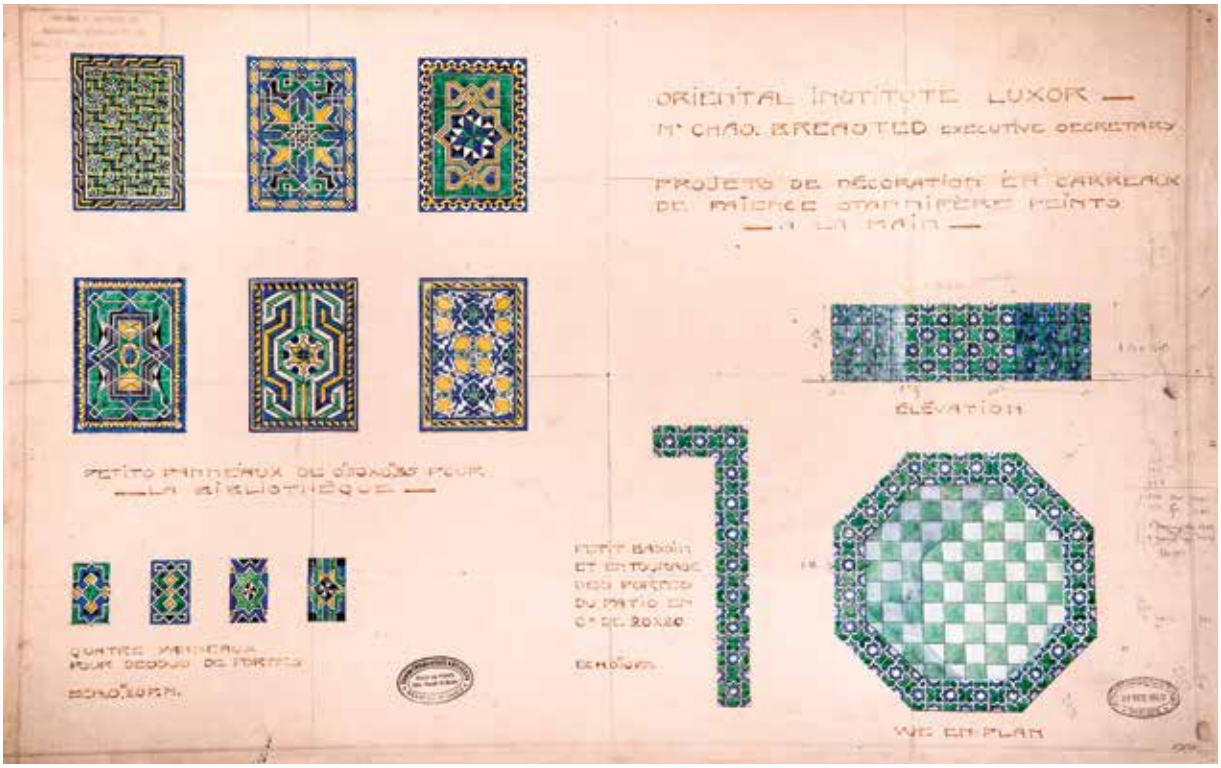

Figure 12.20. Tiles designed by Fourmaintraux & Delassus. Those on the left ornament the walls of the library and the courtyard. To the right is the plan for the courtyard fountain.

satisfactory aspects of Hunter's design, and in 1932 this section of the house was redesigned (see "Early Days at the House: Settling In" later in this chapter).

Eight bedrooms surrounded the court to the east of the library annex. Two restrooms were located in the corridor.

The residence wing was two stories high with a third-floor sewing/children's room and patio. The formal entry was on the west via a double door reached by several steps that led to an arched portico (fig. 12.24). This entrance led into a foyer between the dining and sitting rooms.* A large, screened porch (called the "bird cage") was to the west of the sitting room and music/tea room. Beyond was the courtyard with a central fountain clad in the same bright faience tiles as on the library walls (fig. 12.25). The entrances to the four bedrooms (which could be configured as two suites) on the ground floor were shadowed by an arched portico whose pillars had lattices to support bougainvillea.

The public rooms—the sitting room and music room (also called the tea room)—were to the north of the entrance hall. The music room had a door on its north side allowing entry from the library wing through the arcade. Doors on its south side gave access to the courtyard and the sitting room. A piano, topped with a plaster replica of the bust of Nefertiti, stood at the east end of the room flanked by shelves for record albums (many of them moved from the old house; fig. 12.26).† The sitting room had a baronial-scale fireplace whose mantle bore the University of Chicago seal (fig. 12.27). The entrance to the adjacent foyer could be closed off with a heavy curtain. The jambs between most of the public rooms were adorned with stepped, Art Deco decoration in plaster (fig. 12.27 and 12.28). A

Figure 12.21. View of the library, looking north, March 1996. A medallion with the head of a Libyan is above the far door. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 12.22. Medallion of a Libyan designed by Virgilio Canziani and executed by a local sculptor, mounted above the north door of the library. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

* In later years at least, this entrance was seldom (or never) used, and visitors entered through the music/tea room—or, if they were familiar with the house, through the corridor behind the music room that led to the courtyard.

† A piano seems always to have been in that location. The current piano was a gift from Claude Traunecker in 1984. I thank Alain Arnaudiès for this information.

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Figure 12.23. George Hughes in the field director's office, 1950. Photo: C. Nims.

small closet in the foyer served as the phone booth (and later the liquor magazine). The long, rectangular dining room beyond the foyer (fig. 12.28) had a rounded alcove at its end. A door on the east side of the dining room gave access to the large pantry with built-in shelving, the kitchen, and the scullery. A door off the kitchen opened to a patio, which was the access for the kitchen staff and tradesmen. A large, screened-in porch ran along the west face of the residence wing north of the entrance and around the north side.

Two sets of stairs in the courtyard, one on the west, the other on the south, gave access to the upper floor with fourteen bedrooms (some of them doubles with a bath between them, others doubles with a separate entrance to the bath, two singles with a bath, and one larger suite with a sitting room). Most of them were designed as a pair of bedrooms with a bathroom between them (fig. 12.29). These rooms could be used as doubles with a shared bath, but whenever possible, a staff member was given both rooms to create a suite with a sitting room and private bath. Even in the early planning stage, Nelson was clear that he did not want to "crowd" the staff by putting two people in a single bedroom, unless temporarily.[46] A large balcony on the south was accessible from three bedrooms. The director's suite on the north and northwest consisted of a sitting room with fireplace,* a large bedroom, a bath, and an adjoining smaller room that was initially used for the Nelsons' daughter, Irene. The suite faced the west and north and had an especially large balcony (shared with one of the smaller suites) that wrapped around to give views of the west bank. The balcony connected to a walkway over the arcade linking the library and residence. Another flight of stairs in the

* The built-in bookshelves in the suite were specially made to accommodate Nelson's paperback detective novels rather than academic books.

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Figure 12.24. Entrance to the residence wing, 1950. Note the plaque with the phoenix crest of the University of Chicago above the balcony. Photo: C. Nims.

Figure 12.25. View of the courtyard looking south toward the kitchen windows and the stairs to the upper floor. The fountain is clad in brightly colored French faience tiles (see fig. 12.20, right). Photo: E. Teeter.

Figure 12.26. Music/tea room looking to the east, with a replica of the bust of Nefertiti atop the piano, 1991. Tea was, and is, served here every day at 5:00 p.m. The furniture is made of heavy wire wrapped in textured paper to resemble rattan or wicker—materials that were vulnerable to insects. Photo: C. Keefe.

Figure 12.27. Sitting room with fireplace bearing the University of Chicago crest, ca. 1933. Most of the furniture, purchased in London in 1931, is still in use today. Photo: H. Leichter.

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Figure 12.28. Dining room, looking north toward the entrance foyer, with a cast from the tomb of Kheruef, presented to the University of Chicago by Zakaria Ghoneim in 1946, displayed on the wall. Photo: Y. Kobylecky, S. Lezon, and A. Tetreault.

middle of the west side led to the sewing/children's room (used as a schoolroom) on the third floor and a large patio on the roof.

The Move

The date of the move from the west bank to the east hinged on several factors. One was the height of the river. They had to wait until the annual inundation receded enough that the crates did not have to go the "long way" north to Howard Carter's house, and from there to the river. By waiting until April, Nelson was able to move the furniture and ninety boxes "of all kinds" straight to the jetty in a "reconditioned" truck left by K. S. Sandford and W. J. Arkell's Prehistoric Survey (1926–33) and piloted by Howard Carter's driver.* There, the crates were

* This task created problems for the driver, Salah el Din Loutfe. On June 24, 1931, he wrote to Nelson saying that Carter had misunderstood the gesture and assumed that he was working for Nelson, which was not the case; the miscommunication complicated his ongoing salary negotiations with Carter (CHP 1025).

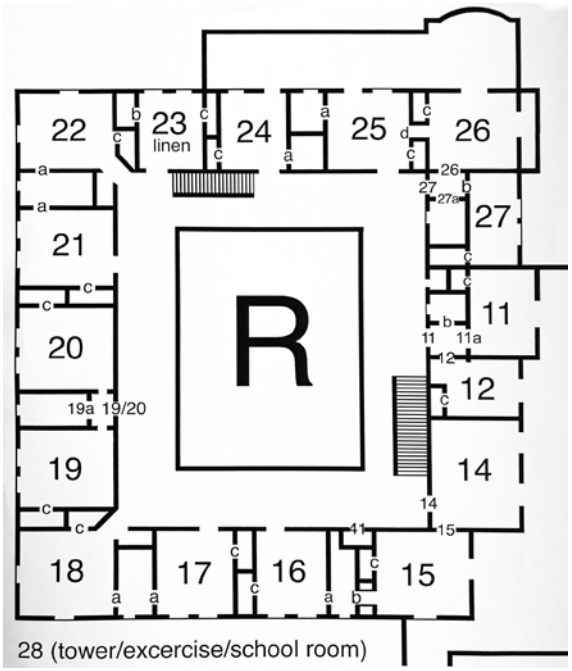

Figure 12.29. Plan of the upper floor as built. "R" designates the open courtyard. The director's suite comprises rooms 14–16. The suite's large patio (only partially shown) wraps around the corner of the building.

loaded onto two rented boats and transported to the foot of the steps in front of the new headquarters. Most of the packing was done by Keith and Diederika Seele and Henry Leichter. The entire move took a very quick five days; Nelson had hired ten porters and was amazed that it all went so well, remarking, "I was greatly surprised at the entire absence of noise and disputing on the part of the men. There was less 'Kalam' [complaining] than I have ever known on such an occasion." In fact, the move was so efficient that Hunter had to ask the porters to take a week's break during the process. The Nelsons and Hunter spent the move at the Luxor Hotel, where they were closer to the project.[47]

Another critical factor in the timing of the move, or rather the actual move-in, was the condition of the new house's walls, which were covered with layers of plaster that had to dry completely before they could be tinted. Nelson wanted to allow them to cure over the summer, telling Breasted, "I do not want to move in the middle of the season, for it would thoroughly demoralize work for a considerable time. The first of April is a time for such work, when we could close down the recording and turn our whole staff on to the job of supervising." Nelson estimated that once the walls were cured and painted, it would take three weeks to get the books back on the shelves. He intended to supervise that task himself rather than leave it to the librarian, Miss Byles, because he feared that she would "crock up" and "be more trouble than she would be worth."[48] Until the library was ready to receive the shelving and books, everything was stored in the adjoining rooms and offices.[49]

On April 27, 1931, Nelson wrote to Breasted from "my new office in the Headquarters of the Oriental Institute in Egypt, at LUXOR, not Gurna. To be sure, I am closely surrounded by boxes and furniture of all sorts and kinds, but at least I am here."[50]

According to the elder Breasted, this new headquarters was not to be called Chicago House; that name "is to be retained for the old house until it is demolished but is not to be carried over to the new building, for which a new name has not yet been selected."[51] No new name was ever coined, so the house is called "Chicago House" today.

Early Days at the House: Settling In

Nelson had to adjust to his new surroundings, especially the atmosphere of Luxor as opposed to Gourna: "Living in Luxor, except within our own grounds, is anything but pleasant and we all often sigh for the freedom of the other side of the river. But we cannot have ideal conditions and fortunately from that point of view our grounds are large, though I often wish they were smaller, when it comes to their upkeep." He also commented on the character of the local population: "Our own people have not been interfered with in any way, although I have a feeling that our neighbors are, in general, hostile to us. I only hope there is no trouble when the place is closed."* Nelson expressed buyer's remorse at the size of the new compound: "I am beginning to regret that we purchased so much land; we have a very large area to look after and shall be under considerable expense in the matter of gardening."[52] The gardens were designed and planted by Mr. Keller, the gardener at the Winter Palace Hotel, who vowed to the Nelsons that he would create "the best garden in Egypt."[53] It included a vegetable garden, "watered from our well and kept as free as possible from contamination." Ornamental plants were grown from seeds obtained in California.[54]

As they adjusted to the house, they recognized deficiencies, many of which they blamed on poor communication with Hunter. The most serious was the design of the drafting room, which Nelson referred to as "the most important room in the place."[55] The artists needed plenty of natural light for their work, and the windows in the one long studio were too small, so they reduced the usable light by about two or three hours per day.[56] Nelson was

* Nelson to Breasted, 24 November 1931, CHP 285. This comment was made in the context of physical altercations between the Gourna-based workmen who worked for Chicago and the Karnak-based workmen. See chapter 5, "The Move to Karnak, 1930–."

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unhappy with how the construction of the studio had been coordinated and disappointed that the design for the windows he approved—two windows close to each other "making practically a double window"—had not been followed. Instead, Hunter specified a "series of single windows, of the same style as the other rooms in the house," and Nelson had been too busy to inspect the building for several weeks. He commented, "It is another case of architects sacrificing efficiency for looks."[57] Breasted wrote to Nelson, "What I cannot understand is how a man like Hunter, who has spent the last few years of his life in a drafting room, could have planned a room like this for our new building in Luxor and then, after laying it out with insufficient floor space, have put up the elevation with insufficient fenestration. I think he ought to be made to pay the bill out of his own purse—but that being out of the question, we shall have to do as I indicated in my cable—use the welcome savings you have been making on the favorable rate of exchange."[58] The studio was so deficient that Canziani had to work in the "visitor's waiting room" that opened to the loggia. But this arrangement was an "inconvenience" for Nelson because he needed that space as a reception area for his many visitors; with Canziani occupying it, visitors were taken to the music room in the residence building or directly to Nelson's office, neither situation being desirable.

Nelson returned to the idea of having the drafting studios on an upper floor, suggesting to Breasted that they "build another room of as light construction as possible above the quarters of the European servants.* That would be an ideal spot from the point of view of the drafting work. On the other hand, I am not sure that the foundations of that building are adequate to meet an increase of weight. . . . Moreover, our experience here has shown the great advantage of having all the work concentrated in one place, where the draughtsmen and epigraphers may consult with each other easily at all times."[59] They went back to the idea of new studios on the north side of the existing ones, and by early 1932, artist/architect Geoffrey Mileham had presented preliminary plans to Breasted and Nelson that were reviewed and approved by Prentice Duell of the Sakkarah Expedition (figs. 12.30–12.32).[60] Mileham went to Cairo to solicit bids for materials, and he stayed in Luxor through June to supervise the construction.[61]

Several versions of the studios were considered. Most of the discussions were about the exact size and position of the windows. One plan showed a single large studio placed to the north of the existing one and joined to it by a hall. The other, actually built, was a rectangular addition with five studios, all with large, north-facing, metal-framed windows ordered from England (fig. 12.33).[62] It connected with the existing offices and epigraphers' rooms through a small hallway. The new studio block was set to the north to create a small court between the studios and the epigraphers' offices, ensuring good daylight for them as well. The new building connected with the garden by a door on its east side and had a staircase leading up to the roof. The studios also had their own small heating plant. The project was finished in late spring 1932, and the good news was that it was built for less than the estimated budget.[63]

A further problem was that the library building had inadequate heating—it was so chilly, in fact, that the staff had chronic colds in the winter—making it "almost useless as a place to work in." They had been using a small oil stove, but it was "smelly and dirty," and, Nelson commented, "I am convinced, not good for the throat." Nelson had a new, oil-burning furnace installed outside the building. The pipes, which carried hot water (rather than steam), ran into the building in a circuit of the library, offices, and restrooms. The system was installed in September 1935—a large project that involved tearing up and replacing the floors.[64]

Nelson also complained about the amount of storage: "One of the most serious defects in this new establishment was the absence of store rooms.

* Presumably the bedrooms on the northeast and southeast of the library.

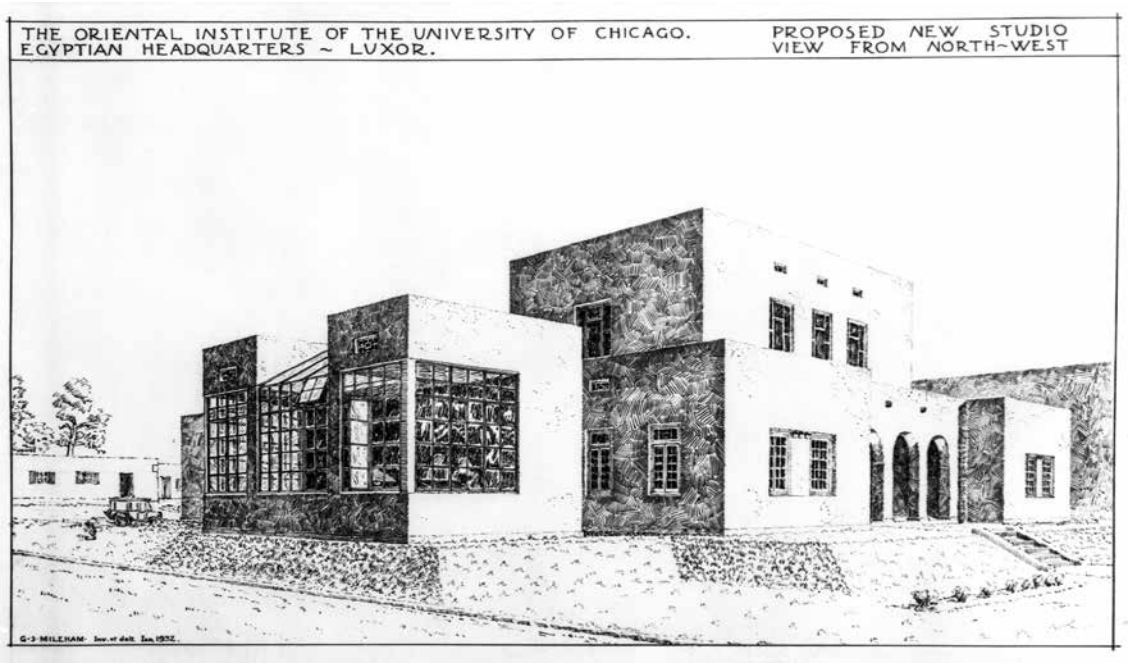

Figure 12.30. Proposed redesign (1) of the studios by Geoffrey Mileham, 1932. A block of studios, all with northern light, was added directly to the epigraphers' offices, cutting off their direct light. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

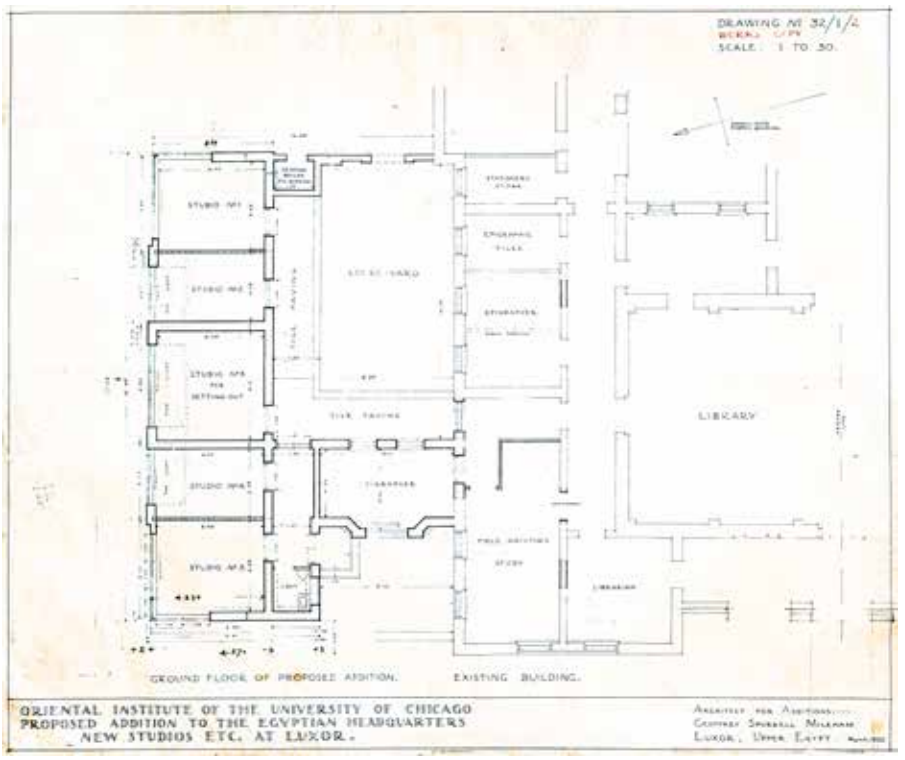

Figure 12.31. Geoffrey Mileham's final plan for the new drafting rooms, March 1932. It added five studios, separated from the epigraphers' offices by a courtyard. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

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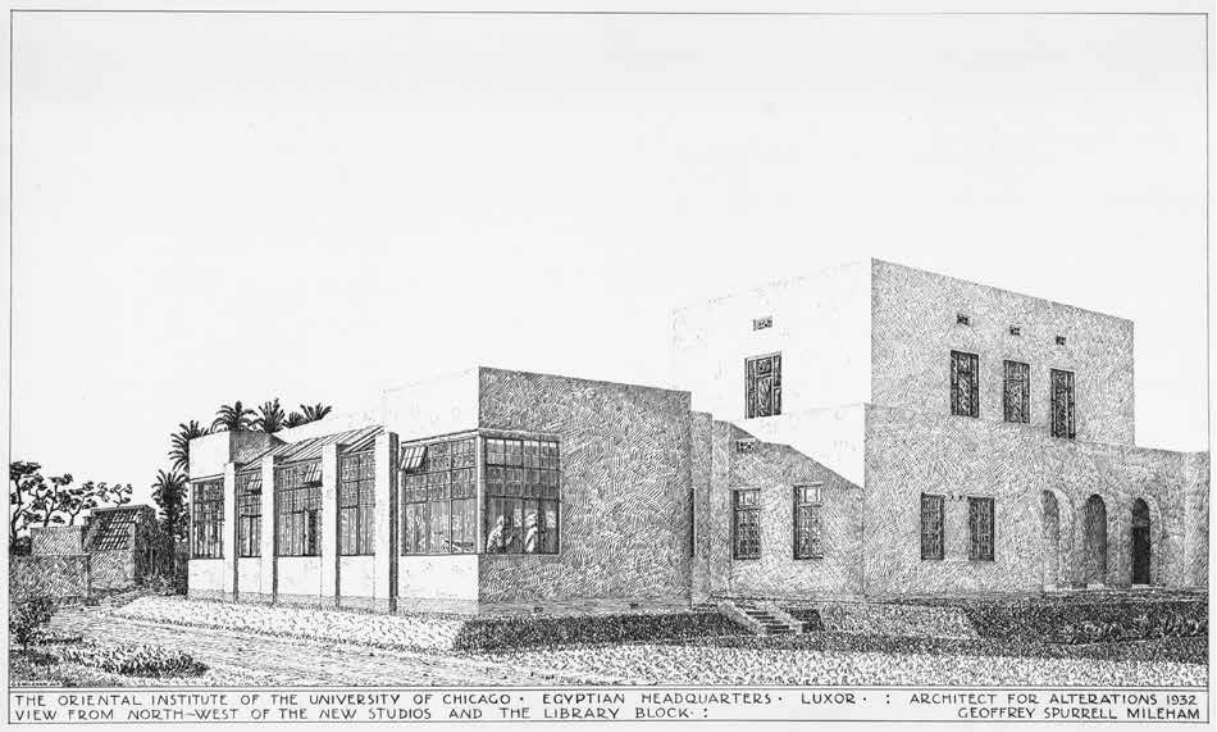

Figure 12.32. Proposed redesign (2) of the studios by Geoffrey Mileham, 1932. The studios (left) were separated from the epigraphers' offices by a courtyard that could be approached by stairs on the west face of the building. Image: Epigraphic Survey.

Figure 12.33. Artists' studios as rebuilt in 1932. Photo: H. Leichter.

Hunter provided only two small rooms for this purpose. I have already built three additional store rooms* and am now erecting more which I hope will do us for some time. We also have our one empty bedroom of this season stacked with furniture. A plant of this size necessarily accumulates a great deal of stuff that is too good to throw away, but is not always in use."[65]

The venting for the kitchen proved to be another issue that needed to be resolved. Nelson reported, "The flue in the chimney is so large that the draught draws all the soot and much of the ashes out of the chimney and as the chimney is on the edge of the patio, the soot and ashes are swept down into the court and into the rooms surrounding it. This is a very serious situation. . . . The court is at present often full of smoke. Moreover, the coal consumption of [*sic*] very great with the forced draught under which the stove works."[66] He built a taller chimney and reduced the size of the flue to rectify the problem. Nelson also criticized the drains in the kitchen, which were apt to become completely stopped up, but "unfortunately, they were so designed that it was impossible to clean them throughout their entire length without tearing up the floors." The stoppage was blamed on a settling tank and cesspool of insufficient size.[67]

Another serious problem was likewise related to the septic and drainage systems, which Nelson concluded were "wrong in the beginning." He blamed sickness among all the staff at the beginning of the 1932 season on the "sewer gas" that permeated the grounds, noting, "When I returned this month, the residence building, both upstairs and down, was almost uninhabitable on account of gas." The Milehams had sore throats; Egyptologist Siegfried Schott became ill after one night and the Nelsons within two nights, after which Libbie threatened to decamp to Alexandria. Nelson blamed the trouble on "the fact that the settling tank was ventilated instead of the cesspool, and as the outlet from the tank was on the roof of the residence building, the gas descended directly into the Central Court and filled every room."[68]

The bathrooms were also not as the Nelsons had specified—in fact, they "were not consulted at all" and they "would not have chosen the fittings that were bought." Hunter specified fixtures the Nelsons had in Beirut, which did not work properly 10 percent of the time because the plunger did not seat into the bottom of the tank, requiring someone to open the tank and move the plunger to stop the water flow. Nelson did "not see several of our household taking any pains to ensure that our water is not wasted in this manner." Further, the faucets in the bathroom sinks were positioned improperly, making it difficult for women to wash their hair.[69]

Nelson was also unhappy that Hunter had not followed his plan for the fireplace mantel in his suite, calling it "a particularly unsightly piece."[70] He wrote to Charles Breasted: "It is of course, too late now, but I am inclined to think that we would have saved money if we had had the plans, as far as the architecture is concerned, drawn up in America, and then sent out here to be put in the hands of a competent local architect to furnish the construction details and to superintend the job. Hunter's travel, salary, hotel bills, draughting assistants . . . amount to considerable."[71] The younger Breasted, who often made personal remarks about others' behavior, commented, "It would not surprise me if Hunter's experience went slightly to his head before he finishes the new structure, or that other disadvantages should crop up. But on the whole we believe that any other arrangement would only have caused us more anxiety and more money." He praised Hunter's "excellent taste" and "excellent pencil."[72]

By the end of the project, both Breasteds and the Nelsons were unhappy with Hunter's performance. As Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "All these difficulties with Hunter were each somewhat small in themselves, but the sum total left a rather

* These rooms are probably nos. 18–20 next to the laundry drying yard. The construction of these rooms entailed moving the former ironing room (old no. 13) and expanding that space to the west to create the three magazines.

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unpleasant flavor in our mouths. The whole trouble with the matter was that he was unwilling to accept our views on the building and considered us quite old fashioned and devoid of taste in such matters. The real difficulty lay, of course, in the fact that, to finish the buildings by the season, the plans had to be rushed through without proper consultancy with those who had the most experience on the spot."[73] This opinion was quite a change from their praise for him only a few months earlier.*

By fall 1933, the long-projected corniche road between Karnak and Luxor was finally underway. In 1932, Breasted made a last-ditch appeal to the government to halt its construction, or at least part of it. Armed with a map from *Baedeker's Egypt*, a government map, and "a full set of photographs of our new luxury buildings," he urged the municipality to run the road through only half of the frontage and turn the other half into a "Riverside Park."† He stressed "the added beauty of the development, the substantially diminished expense to the government in the land purchase involved, and the possibility of income by charging an admission fee" that would be waived for guests of hotels such as the Savoy,‡ but which general tourists, and of course locals, would have to pay. He reported, "The minister§ seemed much interested and I asked him to write to his government about it."[74] One can only wonder what the official actually thought of the idea, but it was based on information Nelson had received from the *maamur* (police chief) that the municipality had initially planned to build the road from Karnak south through the Chicago House frontage, and then build the southern section later.[75] Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "I am going to fight this plan as hard as I can. When the government begins to dispossess the property owners by the Savoy hotel, I should then make no objection to giving up our share of the property. But a road leading from Karnak merely to the hospital would be of no use to anyone, as it would really lead nowhere. The government wishes to dispossess the other property on either side of us before the land is built upon and improved, so that they may acquire it at a lower rate."[76]

Although the land in front of the house was scheduled to be given over to the road, Chicago had fenced it, and it functioned as the front yard with the paths/drives from the library and residence leading to the stairs of the private dock (see fig. 12.1). The road meant that the front boundary would have to be moved to the east, and the semicircle path/drive in front of the house would be lost. Three new gates were constructed. The middle one led to the center of the arcade that connected the two buildings; the other two were positioned to the north and south sides of the property.¶ In February 1934, the work was going on directly in front of the house, and the construction created great amounts of dust that bothered the residents.[77] Because there

* Another issue, unrelated to Hunter's professional performance, was his personal life. Charles Breasted wrote to Nelson (23 June 1931, CHP 982), "I am indeed sorry to learn of the unsatisfactory and highly regrettable manner in which Hunter has conducted himself, socially and otherwise. You have been most praise-worthy reserved in your comments about him, but I know that it will be a relief to you when Hunter's connection with the Luxor project is terminated."

† This plan was originally suggested to Nelson by the artist Norman de Garis Davies (Nelson to C. Breasted, 3 January 1932, CHP 1256).

‡ The Savoy Hotel was to the south, about halfway between Chicago House and the hospital. It was built in the late 1800s, and after sitting empty for years following a fire in the late 1980s(?), it was demolished in 1990, supposedly to make way for a shopping center. In 2023, the lot was still fenced and undeveloped.

§ Sesostris Sidarouss Pasha.

¶ The north gate adjacent to the guardhouse is the main entrance used today. The central, most formal gate is used only for special occasions, more recently for FOCH tours (see "Life at Chicago House in More Recent Years" later in this chapter). The south gate, according to Tina Di Cerbo, was rarely or never used. The guardhouse is shown on the early plans, so it seems likely that the north gate was the usual entrance, and it is where the brass identifying plaques are located.

was now a public walk through the property, Nelson ordered new gates for the riverfront. In April 1935, he received £E521 for "the land taken by them along the river front, less the expenses incurred by us in rearranging the grounds and building a new fence."* The creation of the corniche road brought new levels of noise and inquisitive tourists—both unwelcome distractions.

In about 1933, a small "mechanic's house" was built on the south side of the compound between the kitchen and the laundry/staff area. This became the domain of John (Tim) Healey, who came to the Survey in spring 1932, and it thereafter was known as "Healey House." The motivation for building a separate residence is unclear. In October 1934, Nelson wrote, "it is one thing to have Healey a member of the household," suggesting that he was not viewed as a social equal. This comment echoes one made by artist Donald Wilber that, in the pecking order at Chicago House, the mechanic ranked at the bottom of the Western staff,[78] and so perhaps was not welcome to live in the main house.

Infrastructure

There was a desire for Chicago House to be an independent entity, or at least to be able to function if cut off from city services.[79] In the planning stage, Nelson was told the municipality was "endeavoring" to get people to use the town water supply for "sanitary reasons" and discouraging people from taking unfiltered water directly from the Nile. He suggested, "Even if we use the town water, we should have it filtered. I believe it would be wise to drill our own well, for we shall use a great deal of water if we have a garden, as I hope will be possible. Moreover our own well makes us independent."[80] The revised plan of the compound from 1930 shows a pump and an adjacent "still." The well became an issue a few years later, in 1936, when Nelson received a notice from the authorities at Qena (the seat of the local government) that the pump for the well had to be licensed, but that license might not be issued (and the well might be closed) because it was too close to the dike. He communicated with Oriental Institute director (and former Survey member) John Wilson: "If this notice means that the Government is going to close our well and not allow us to draw water from it, the situation is serious. We have connection with the town water supply but the cost of the water is excessive compared to what it costs us to pump it from our well. We do not use much water in the house, to be sure, but the garden and the darkroom take a large supply. Moreover there is no other place within our grounds which is the proper distance from both the river and the canal so that we cannot dig a new well, which would be less expensive, I believe, than using the town water for any length of time." He concluded with the comment, "Hunter told me when he built the house that he had complied with the instructions of the local authorities regarding the location of the well, but it would now seem that he had not done so."[81]

Although Luxor had a new electrical system that "extends just to the road on which our land abuts," Karnak, just to the north, was still dark. Nelson favored installing an independent power plant, and they moved one of the generators and its batteries from the west bank to the new house.†

In May 1933, a "city telephone" line was installed at the house, and Nelson wrote that Breasted phoned him several times from Cairo, remarking how pleasant it was to be able to speak with him.[82]

Nelson also considered updating the kitchen. "I have been wondering how far it would be wise to install any modern kitchen equipment. The native chef would probably not understand some of the

* Nelson to C. Breasted, 14 April 1935, CHP 1539. Nelson and Breasted appealed unsuccessfully to the University of Chicago to keep the money in their own budget. The funds were badly needed because the dollar was devalued (Breasted to Nelson, 8 May 1934, CHP 1511).

† The Gourna house had two generators. They left a smaller Delco generator in the west (Nelson to C. Breasted, 4 July 1929, ISAC Museum Archives).

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appliances." He considered a dishwasher, "for it seems to me that a small one of these would be of great help in our new house." But he ruled it out because "they require such an inordinate amount of hot water that in a country where fuel is as expensive as in Egypt, we can hardly afford this luxury." He considered different cooking fuels (gas or coal) and concluded that the cooks were most used to a Primus kerosene stove, which also was the most economical. But he did not rule out switching to coal if it gave superior results and was not too expensive.[83] He specified "large and proper sinks from America . . . with extra faucets, for they are sure to be broken." Bathroom fixtures were to be of American design manufactured in Germany.[84]

The larger house necessitated more effort to run and track its finances—tasks that were beyond the Nelsons' ability (or desire). In the 1933 season, two important people joined the staff. Horatio Vester was hired as business manager, replacing Alfred Voneschen (see further in "Life at Chicago House, 1931–" later in this chapter). Nelson was enthusiastic about Vester, writing that he was "just the man I have been wanting for Business Manager. He is very valuable, quiet and efficient without any fuss whatever. We all like him greatly." Tim Healey also joined as chief engineer—a post he held until his retirement in 1970. He was indispensable, and over the years he kept the cars, boats, generators, and everything else running, often scrounging for parts in the back streets of Cairo and Luxor.

Furnishings

Before the move to Luxor, Nelson and his wife inventoried the furniture at the old house to decide what they might take with them. They determined that they would need more shelving for the library, and a lot of new furniture and furnishings. Charles Breasted advocated for having the entire house furnished by Maples of London, a firm that had furnished the Semiramis Hotel in Cairo and the office of the Egyptian prime minister.[85] While in London, Nelson met with Maples sales representative Frank Wray, and although impressed, he was concerned that the furniture was "too English" and also would make Chicago House look like a hotel.[86] Nevertheless, in July 1931, Nelson placed an order with Maples for more than £400 (sterling) including a three-seat settee with matching easy chairs and Windsor chairs, as well as miscellaneous items such as towel racks, yardage for curtains and upholstery, and a single gramophone record(!). Most of the Maples furniture was intended for the sitting room, which Nelson thought "would look very well although simple" (see fig. 12.27).[87] He also placed an order with Simmons Company, makers of metal furniture, who, through Sears, Roebuck & Co. in Chicago, provided new dressers;* and Michigan Seating Products, from whom Nelson bought twelve armchairs, twelve rocking chairs in "Baronial" finish, and some wastebaskets.[88] Amice Calverley and Myrtle Broome of the British Abydos Expedition stayed at the new Chicago House, and Broome commented:

> One thing caused us a lot of amusement, there were two rocking chairs in our room, of course I promptly sat down in one & to my amazement found it was made of tin painted & grained to imitate wood!! We then examined the rest of the furniture & found it was all metal; chest of drawers—looking glass, writing desk bookcase etc. We learnt that there are 70 rooms, & they are all furnished with this metal furniture which came all the way from America & of which they are very proud.† Of course it is really excellent for the climate as the white ants cannot eat it; but it is so awful to have it made to so exactly imitate wood, even to grooving & turning, & in the lounge they actually had imitation wicker work chairs made with metal wire painted to look like the real thing. I don't see why metal furniture shouldn't have a special design of its own, it could be really nice.[89]

* Simmons had also supplied most of the furniture for the old Chicago House (receipt, 17 June 1926, CHP 1894).

† In reference to the Simmons metal furniture.

Nelson bought five new "drawing stands" in 1930 from W. F. Stanley & Co. in London, which continued to be a source for artists' supplies.[90] Nelson writes of reconditioning some of the old furniture so it looked "good as new," and some of that was also moved.

Nelson also ordered additional shelving for the library from a British supplier.[91] Because the library at Gourna was to be demolished, all the shelving, folio cabinets, tables, and chairs were moved to Luxor.

Libbie Nelson was responsible for decorating the house and consulting on the furniture and fixtures. She devised six different color schemes to be used in the residence-wing bedrooms, and annotated a floor plan with where the furniture should be placed.

Nelson and Hunter discussed how the association of Chicago House with the University of Chicago might be expressed through its decoration. Nelson wanted to put the university's seal prominently over the fireplace in the sitting room, but he balked at the $240 that the university would charge for the medallion. He worked with Canziani, who thought it could be made much more cheaply by an Italian friend, but it was finally ordered from the French firm Fourmaintraux & Delassus, which made the tiles that decorate the library and the fountain and walls in the residence courtyard.[92] It never arrived from France, however, and Canziani finally had it made in Cairo for £E20.[93]

Nelson also wanted the university seal above the entrance to the residence wing. Ting Hunter suggested that Janet Woolman, the wife of the architect working with Hölscher at Medinet Habu, could do the job.* She later recalled, "After lunch went over to the new house to start modeling the eagle†—It is a huge plaque to be set in the wall of the entrance—Enormous job but I think I can handle it quite well with my previous training in that line." Laurence Woolman wrote to his parents, "Janet has been occupied the past two days in the part of sculptress. She is anonymously working for the Oriental Institute in Ting's office modeling an eagle . . . which is about 60 cms. square and to be placed over the entrance to the residence group of the new house. She is working it in clay later to be cast and fitted into the wall" (see fig. 12.24).‡

In May 1946, another prominent piece of decorative art—the large plaster cast of the princesses from the tomb of Kheruef—was presented to Nelson by Zakaria Ghoneim, then chief inspector of Luxor. It was intended to be shipped to Chicago, but its weight and difficulties with packing and shipping made it too difficult to transfer, so it stayed in Luxor; today, it still hangs in the dining room (see fig. 12.28).§

The Financial Crash and the Future of Chicago House, 1936–1940

In 1937, the budget was cut so dramatically that the Survey staff was reduced to the Nelsons with a house staff of three or four persons, leaving the large, new house very empty. Calverley of the Abydos Expedition visited in 1936 and related to her colleague Broome, "The place seems quite deserted now they have reduced their staff & Nelson thinks they will have to close down entirely after

* She "wistfully" told Hunter that she would "would love to have free hand to decorate" Chicago House. She decorated the Sakkarah Expedition house the following year (see "Memphis House" in chapter 9).

† She (and her husband) consistently referred to it as an eagle rather than a phoenix.

‡ Woolman's sculpture was mounted on the facade in March 1932. On March 4, 1931, she wrote, "The cast turned out quite well and now I can leave a permanent reminder of my stay in Luxor"; Laurence Woolman, "Two Years on the Nile" (unpublished memoir), 594–96. I thank Laurence and Janet's son, David Woolman, for sharing this document that preserves many details of building Chicago House.

§ Nelson noted to Wilson, "The only request they said they had to make in connection with it is that there will be a label attached stating who found the relief and who made the cast. I have some notion there is some dispute regarding the discoverer" (Nelson to Wilson, 16 May 1946, ISAC Museum Archives).

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three years, he hopes to complete the work that they have in hand."[94]

Nevertheless, Nelson reported that the remaining staff bore up under the new circumstances: "The spirit of the household seems so far to be very good. Everyone is joining in cheerfully and accepting economies with a good will."[95] But things were not good, and Nelson was under tremendous pressure to deal with the expenses of a new headquarters that housed a much smaller staff. In October, business manager Vester packed the personal possessions of staff who would not return—Hölscher, Alfred Bollacher, Charles Nims, and J. Anthony Chubb—and forwarded the boxes via American Express. Artists Leslie Greener and Robert Martindale (the latter of whom, Nelson observed, "has accumulated a mass of possessions during his stay here") would return from working in Abydos and attend to their own possessions. Nelson morosely commented, "This place is full of ghosts."[96]

By the beginning of 1937, it was full crisis mode about "the problem of the Luxor house"[97] being far too large (and expensive) for the very small staff,* and Nelson and Wilson discussed what to do with the complex. In December 1936, they had considered renting the extra rooms to Egyptologists who would also be allowed to use the library. Chicago House would avoid the charge of undercutting or competing with Luxor hotels by "issuing cards of associate membership in the Expedition or mak[ing] it into a sort of club which persons could join for a fee and where they could stay at a fixed charge."† A major drawback was the associated expenses—they would have to hire a maître d'hôtel and a better cook. Wilson doubted whether the plan was feasible, responding, "It seems decidedly uneconomical to have the big house largely unused. At the same time, we cannot afford to go into the pension business ourselves. You know that with the exception of pleasant guests like Steindorff and Glanville, we gain no good will by taking in most visitors. They are likely to be critical rather than appreciative. I doubt whether the number of Egyptologists would justify the venture, and certainly we do not want to compete with the hotels by opening the gates still further."[98]

Another related solution was to go into a partnership and run it as a hotel for tourists.‡ Nelson noted, "The Imperial Airways are dissatisfied with the treatment their passengers receive at the Luxor Hotel and they would seriously think of taking it on a renting basis. But to do so would involve many difficulties if we wish to continue to make this the residence of an Expedition."[99] A further option was to sell the entire property to the government as a training school, "but none of them want to pay any proper price for it."

There were also discussions about retaining the house but reducing its footprint, thereby lowering the costs. Wilson inquired, "Could the staff or yourself and Libbie with [artist Laurance] Longley take over the library quarters, rent or sell the living quarters, and run a satisfactory wall through the estate (Leichter of course will live in town)?" He also considered the problems: "It seems an easy matter to make the division between the two houses, but I don't know how one could work out the approaches, garages, power rooms, servant quarters, etc."[100] Nelson later revived this possibility with Wilson: "I pose again the question: Is any division of the present quarters possible where the expedition retains the library building and sells or lets the living quarters? I know you do not like this solution but feel that it may be the least of several evils."[101]

* For the 1937 season, there were six staff members (including Nelson), and for 1938 and 1939 (the last season of operation before the outbreak of World War II), four—a very small group for the size of the house.

† Nelson to Wilson, 15 December 1936, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1772; Nelson to C. Breasted, 1 October 1931, CHP 1053.

‡ In March 1937, Nelson discussed the possibility of operating Chicago House as a hotel with Mr. Kienberger, the manager of the Luxor Hotel. His report was "not encouraging" (Nelson to Wilson, 10 March 1937, CHP 1254).

The idea of simply selling the new house in its entirety and moving back to the Gourna house was also considered. Nelson started this plan by letting it "be known in certain quarters that I would recommend selling the place if we could secure a proper sum, twenty-five to thirty thousand pounds. This, of course, would not in any way bind the University, but it would be worthwhile seeing what might come of it." He later reported, "I heard a report yesterday that the Department of Antiquities is going to buy this place, make it their headquarters in Upper Egypt, and open a sort of pension for visiting archaeologists. This is a sample of the kind of talk that is going round." They also joked that they might sell it to King Farouk as a winter residence: "It would make a fine place for the *Harim* to gather on sunny days."[102] The word definitely got out about Chicago's situation. As Nelson wrote to Wilson, "The reports that we are trying to dispose of this place are very persistent and will not die no matter what we say. I have had several persons asking about the place, but they all want to get it at a great bargain. The other day the head of the cadastral survey came here and told me that, having heard that we wished to dispose of the place, he was ready to recommend to the Government that they pay six to ten thousand pounds for it as a place for the survey offices. That is about the sum that everyone thinks they should pay."[103]

But the idea of moving back to the west revived the issue of the commute and the expense of cars and boats to cross the river, all of which argued against it. Nevertheless, Nelson toyed with the possibility of buying a "small piece of land on the island across the river and put[ting] up a small place there. From that location we could work on either side of the river as we can from here. However, with the present uncertainty about the future, even that would, to my mind, be unwise." Nelson seemed to be resigned to losing the new headquarters and to reestablishing themselves in a more modest setting. As he wrote to Wilson, "I would not advocate again installing such a large expedition here as we had in the past. It was too large for the best work and was, I feel, out of proportion to the opportunities before the Institute elsewhere. If we do not have so large a household, this place is too large to be economically justifiable."[104]

A few weeks later, Wilson and Nelson again looked at ways they might economize enough to keep the house. The first idea was a variation of shrinking its footprint: "Move the Library, or most of it, into the residence building, using the two sitting rooms and the other bedrooms on the ground floor for the Library and an office-study for myself. This should enable us to close the present office building and dispense with the services of one *farrash*.* It would also mean that we would save on light, water, heat, and in other minor ways. We would have to close the Library to all but scholars and allow no visitors who wish to look at the 'pretty pictures.' [Artist] Longley would use one of the rooms on the 2nd floor for his work." Other suggestions were to dismiss most of the kitchen staff and one of the two ladder men and to transfer the other to garden duty. Nelson also suggested concentrating their scientific effort on Karnak because of its proximity to the house: "Work for only six weeks or two months on the other side of the river [Medinet Habu], which would save the wages of the guard on the west bank and would require less benzene. We might even lay up one of the cars and the boat for most of the time. By devoting ourselves to Karnak for some years to come, we would undoubtedly find it less expensive."[105]

Although he made drastic cuts in his budget, Nelson refused to budge on the possibility of letting engineer Healey go:

> The more I think of the possibility of losing Healey, the more I feel that to do so would be a serious matter. We have a large amount of machinery here which, with a native in charge, would soon go to pieces. There are three cars, two motor boats, three electric generators, two batteries, two pumps with engines attached, one electric pump, four Frigidaires, and the apparatus in the dark room

* Cleaner.

> as well as the plumbing and electrical fittings. If Healey goes the cost of running the place will undoubtedly mount and the value of the equipment rapidly deteriorate. I would rather have Healey than have an assistant for the other work. Without him much more of my time than now even would go to looking after the material plant.

But he was concerned whether he could manage to keep Healey, because engineers were in great demand in the United Kingdom, at wages more attractive than Nelson could pay.[106]

Nelson and Wilson returned to the idea of closing half the house. Wilson initially favored the staff moving into the library wing and selling or renting the rest, while Nelson preferred the opposite—moving the library books into the sitting rooms and ground-floor bedrooms, with the staff living upstairs. Nelson acknowledged that if that decision was taken, then he wanted to make the move in spring 1937 to be settled for the start of the next season.[107]

Perhaps because they were not able to get an offer anywhere close to their investment, there was no further discussion of closing part of the house or selling it.[108] As Nelson departed Egypt for Chicago in May 1939, he commented to Wilson:

> I feel more ready to go than at any time heretofore. The atmosphere of this place is not pleasant, and the continued discussion of the possibility of war leaves one very uncertain and unsettled. . . . We are bringing with us eighteen pieces of baggage and eight cases of household goods. Do not be surprised if some day a van rolls up to the Institute with some of this stuff aboard. I have nowhere else to send it. On the same steamer with me are coming the four cases of collation sheets and three cases of ostraca, which the museum passed without protest. I have the demotic papyri which Edgerton brought here with me. The museum passed them also.*

In early February 1940, Nelson wrote to Wilson about the records (dictionary cards, archaeological index, paleography, and 7,000–8,000 negatives) stored at the house and his concern for their safety. He had already ordered boxes for the index and dictionary materials and expected boxes for the others by the end of the season. He stressed that to bring the material back to Chicago would present difficulties for their future work because they used the index and the dictionary "constantly." But, he commented, "The future looks anything but bright to me, and if the war spreads, as it seems likely to do, I doubt if we can return or if the Government will allow us to return," adding, "I would prefer to have all this property in Chicago." He had begun the transfer of some personal possessions and records in 1939, and in May 1940, he brought back "all records possible" along with twenty-one pieces of other luggage.[109]

A very small staff consisting of the Nelsons, Richard Parker, and Stanley Shepherd lived at the house into early 1940. Leichter, who continued as photographer, lived in his own house in Luxor. One of Nelson's last remarks about Chicago House was that in February, the government finally started to pave the river road. He commented, "That should do away with some of the dust."[110] Before the staff left, they readied the house for a deep sleep of unknown duration.

Chicago House during the War Years

Chicago House and the Survey closed in April 1940 for the duration of World War II. In Nelson's absence, the house was left under a loose chain of command. Initially, it was under the supervision of photographer Leichter, who lived in Luxor, assisted by another employee, Ali. Although Nelson was aware of Leichter's precarious health, he assumed

* Nelson to Wilson, 1 May 1939, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1867. One of the papyri was published by R. K. Ritner as "A Property Transfer from the Erbstreit Archives," in *Grammata Demotika: Festschrift für Erich Lüddeckens zum 15. Juni 1983*, edited by H.-J. Thissen and K. Th. Zauzich (Würzburg: Gisela Zauzich, 1984), 171–88. I thank Richard Jasnow for this reference.

and hoped that Leichter would be able to take care of the house—but in the event, "his health failed* and, I fear, his morale also." When Leichter died in December 1940, Ali was left to supervise along with eight other workmen. By 1941, former Survey Egyptologist Frank O. Allen, who was spending the war years in Luxor, was delegated to assist and to pay the property taxes, "replenish supplies," and, in the company of *reis* Ibrahim Mohammed,† do a weekly inspection of the house.‡ Allen was also authorized to make withdrawals from the bank account for expenses and a small stipend for his services, and he gave Nelson needed advice about arranging an annuity for Leichter's bedridden widow.

On his return to Chicago in 1940, Nelson settled back into life at the Oriental Institute. In 1942, when Wilson was in Washington, DC, working for the State Department,§ Nelson was appointed acting director. In fall 1942, perhaps in anticipation of a forced sequestration, Nelson and Wilson discussed whether the house should be turned over to the military for wartime occupation. Nelson commented, "I have been expecting some such development for a long time."[111] In a letter to Alexander Kirk, the American minister in Cairo, Nelson, in consultation with the University of Chicago, offered the house to American (preferably) or British forces. He attached a list of conditions for the occupation, noting that the house still contained the valuable library: "Refrain from using such portion of the library building as is not designed for sleeping quarters and permit the University to leave in the said space the valuable library now housed there and other valuable equipment and furnishings now housed in the buildings."[112] One of the first stipulations concerned the eight "native caretakers"¶—they were to be retained, or a payment made to "reimburse the University for any expense it might incur for terminal payments to these employees, or maintenance allowed them for the duration of the said occupancy." Other financial arrangements were that the army would pay for the heat, lighting, and insurance, and "insure and agree to indemnify" the University of Chicago for "any war damage to the premises (including parts not occupied by the armed forces) from bombing, invasion, sabotage, civil commutation, etc." Further, the army was obligated to pay for general wear and tear on the building and was not to alter any of the structure without authorization. Ultimately, Chicago House was not occupied by the military and was instead left under the supervision of Allen and Ibrahim Mohammed.

Chicago House after the War

Nelson and his wife were able to return to the house on November 14, 1945, intending to do an inspection and then return to Cairo to obtain the necessary materials for the house's restoration. On November 16, Nelson wrote two letters to Wilson—one general, the other confidential—on the state of the facility. In the general report, Nelson described the house as being "in fair condition. I presume that we could not expect it to be better after five years

* Leichter had leukemia (Nelson to Wilson, 19 January 1939, ISAC Museum Archives). At one point, it was thought that his death was related to a very bad malaria epidemic in Luxor, an event that Nelson blamed for some of the demoralization of the residents and their behavior. The epidemic also may account for an anonymous comment that Chicago House was turned into a hospital for the family of Ibrahim Mohammed. See further in the next section, "Chicago House after the War."

† Ibrahim Mohammed worked for Chicago House from 1928 (starting as a photo assistant) until a few years before his death in 1979, making him the longest-serving employee of the Survey (*AR* 1978–79, 20).

‡ Francis (Frank) O. Allen was a student of Edgerton's. In 1938, he joined George Reisner's expedition at Giza, and in 1942, at the same time he was monitoring Chicago House, he was responsible for safeguarding the Giza expedition's records, depositing them in tombs at Giza. See Der Manuelian, *Walking among Pharaohs*, 741, 751–52, and esp. 797–98.

§ Wilson was with the Office of Strategic Services. See Wilson, *Thousands of Years: An Archaeologist's Search for Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner's), 87–89.

¶ Among the named: Ali, Sadek, Ibrahim Mohammed, Mahmud, and Iliya.

of neglect." Iliya Gabriel, chauffeur for the Survey since 1924, had the sedan up and running, but the garden was a "jungle." Most important, the library seemed to be "intact," although Nelson gathered up a few books that had migrated to the sitting room "where Allen had left them along with some other things." The house was in disarray, with mattresses dragged from the bedrooms on the first and second floors. The confidential report included a comment that he assumed that Allen "had used our suite of rooms." He found lipstick on drinking glasses, intimating some sort of unauthorized partying—an accusation he later retracted.[113]

Following the inventory, Nelson totaled the losses at about forty blankets, several pairs of curtains, nineteen silver coffee pots, most of the silver spoons, and three spare tires for the cars.[114] But of greater concern, and a matter of some delicacy, was the theft of a stone head of a Middle Kingdom king that had been locked in Nelson's closet. The head had been in the Survey's possession since the early 1930s, but the Survey had been unable to obtain a license for its export, so it had languished in the closet of Chicago House.*

Nelson realized that the thefts must have been committed by, or with the assistance of, the staff, for keys were used to enter the rooms. At one point, he considered, "One solution would be to fire the whole lot but I feel that some of the men are free of blame and to fire them would be unjust."[115] Things got more complicated with the receipt of a handwritten letter from "so-and-so" blaming the thefts on Ibrahim Mohammed. The letter related that when the Germans entered North Africa, people in Luxor assumed that the Americans and British would not return, and Ibrahim took "the blankets, sheets, kitchen things darkroom photographs papers and electric things" and hid them at his wife's home. Further, it was charged that Ibrahim had turned the house into a private hospital for Ibrahim's uncle and a member of the Abd el-Rasoul family, and "both of them has contagious disease and Ibrahim Moh. used the mattress blankets pillows sheets for them and when they died all these things took to the graveyard and never returned again to Luxor because they became very rusty and dirty."[116]

Nelson viewed the thefts in the greater context of the war and the stress that it and the recent malaria epidemic had caused. He doubted Ibrahim was the thief and assumed that another employee, Mahmud, had written the letter to cover his tracks, reporting to Wilson, "There are bitter hatreds among the men. Their morale went down as a consequence of my long absence and of the war psychology." He concluded that they had fared better than other Luxor residents, citing the house of the Sultana Melika near the Winter Palace Hotel, which was looted and then set afire to cover up the deed, and the house of a wealthy Copt that was looted of £E10,000 in antiquities, "all done by the servants." He added, "I understand that two of three houses in a nearby town were completely stripped of their contents." Nelson was also empathetic about the shameful way some Egyptians had been treated during the war, citing examples of disdain and bullying by army officers, both British and American. He commented to Wilson, "Moreover the army flings money and material about with utter abandon. Why, therefore, should the Egyptians maintain any great sense of the rights of property?"[117]

The end of 1945 and most of 1946 were devoted to repairing the house and preparing it for the 1946 field season. The most pressing tasks were repairing cracks in the walls, repainting all the outside woodwork and the interior, replacing the household goods and window coverings,

* This head was the subject of correspondence between Breasted and Nelson in 1933–34 when they tried to export it for exhibition at the university's presentation of their work at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934. See E. Teeter, "Egypt in Chicago 1933–1934: The Century of Progress Exposition and Lorado Taft's 'Dream Museum,'" in *Guardian of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honor of Zahi Hawass*, edited by J. Kamrin, M. Barta, S. Ikram, et al. (Prague: Charles University, 2020), 3:1557. Photographs of this head of a king wearing the double crown with uraeus are in the files of the Brooklyn Museum. I thank Tom Hardwick for bringing the photos to my attention.

obtaining new batteries and spare tires for the fleet, and restoring the badly overgrown garden. More complicated was replacing the plates and separators in the main electrical plant, possibly digging a new well,[118] and repairing the stone revetment in front of the house that was being undermined by the Nile, whose current had changed after sandbars formed near Luxor Temple. The damage to the revetment allowed water into the grounds and turned the garden into mud.[119] To fix it, Nelson had the help of Labib Habachi (later a resident at Chicago House), who tried to buy sandstone from the Egyptian Antiquities Service in Cairo.[120]

The years around the 1952 revolution brought new challenges. Hughes felt obligated to hire more security personnel, he faced short supplies of food, and his administrative duties increased as a result of new regulations about employees and even guests (see "Life at Chicago House, 1931–" later in this chapter).

Chicago House in Recent Years

In 1964 and 1965, Egypt was in "a prolonged economic crisis"[121] stemming from the nationalization of industries. Imports were "almost unattainable," and Tim Healey spent a lot of time in Cairo "walking the streets looking for electrical and plumbing material with no success."[122] The infrastructure of the house suffered; the heating in the studios did not work and made it too cold for the artists to work, and the house's water system was unreliable.

After dealing with repairs for eight years, the Nimses welcomed the impending move back to Chicago, Charley writing, "Myrtle and I are very happy that Wente has accepted the position of Field Director, and that he and Leila are going ahead with there [*sic*] at times interrupted plans to marry. I had figured he should come out in the autumn of 1971, and I would want to hand over to him on 1 January 1972." But the transition was not as smooth as expected, and Wente did not arrive in the fall for a transitional period, delaying his arrival in Luxor until January 1972.[123]

Under Kent Weeks, a number of major and minor repairs to ensure the continued good health of Chicago House were made, subjecting the staff to "a year of painting, hammering, plowing and other activities."[124] Healey House was cleaned and made ready for staff and visitors, whose numbers started to grow. The workshops were expanded and reorganized so the workmen could do more basic, everyday repairs themselves.[125] A decision that was to prove very important was the hiring of a local engineer, Saleh Shehat Suleiman (fig. 12.34), who had done some contract work for the house. He was an indispensable member of the staff from 1974 through the 2002 season, and like his predecessor Tim Healey, he could fix anything and kept the physical plant going. A new kitchen garden was planted, the rose garden enlarged, and the public rooms redecorated. The house was run by Susan Weeks, who enjoyed the role of *mudira*.

Director Lanny Bell was attentive to the aging house and devoted a lot of time to its maintenance. In those days, PL 480 funds could be used to improve infrastructure, and Bell, knowing that the grant program was to end, focused on long-term modernization and renovation improvements. One staff member recalled that none of the light fixtures in the kitchen worked at that time, forcing the kitchen staff to cook during the daylight hours and reheat food for dinner by lantern light.[126] Priorities were the wiring, which had become brittle and dangerous; voltage surges that needed to be controlled; and water pipes that frequently burst; and then, of course, many volumes in the library required conservation, and the aging and deteriorating negatives in the photo archive needed copying.[127] The leaking water pipes in the garden were replaced to conserve water. Healey House was further renovated to provide housing for the University of Chicago's Quseir expedition (and others).

In 1978, water pipes burst in the library, and the floors had to be taken up to repair them. Work on the plumbing and electrical systems continued in 1979 and 1980, Bell himself extending his stay in Luxor for three months to supervise the labors that largely resolved those issues. Work

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Figure 12.34. Saleh Shehat Suleiman (right), engineer for Chicago House 1974–2002, shown here with Gharib el-Wair, who has filled a number of roles at Chicago House, 1992. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

continued on the library collection. In the 1978 season, Sidney Huttner, assistant head of special collections at the University of Chicago library, spent a month at the house doing a conservation assessment, and a private grant allowed for the conservation and restoration of books, especially the folio collection.

With the end of PL 480 funds announced for 1981, Chicago House again entered crisis mode and a period of self-examination. Just as in 1936, it was again suggested that the "underutilized" facility be repurposed. Several options were considered. One was to open it as a summer institute for expedition members or individuals doing independent research. A more drastic suggestion was to eliminate the work of the Epigraphic Survey and rent the facility to other missions, using the income to support "modest Egyptological research." Another idea was even more dramatic: sell the complex and use the capital for an endowment to support Egyptological research projects. Yet another idea was to turn the property over to the Egyptian government in exchange for a ninety-nine-year lease. The suggestion that it be turned over to the US Embassy was less appealing, Bell being adamant that the house "must remain in our hands—or at least in American hands—although it must not be connected officially with the American Embassy under any but the direst circumstances."[128]

In the end, Bell, aided by Carlotta Maher (fig. 12.35), shifted into a frenzy of strategic fundraising to literally save the house. Thanks to their efforts, the budget stabilized.

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Figure 12.35. Jill Carlotta Maher (right) explaining the work of the Survey during a library tour, ca. 1990. Photo: S. Lezon.

The Gulf War of 1990–91 brought safety concerns similar to those faced in the Suez Crisis. Again security was beefed up, and the brass plaques on the front gate that identified the compound were removed—this time by house staff.

Major Renovation, 1992

The year 1992 brought the first significant changes to the infrastructure of the house, made possible by a number of converging events. Motivating factors were the need to expand the overcrowded library, to provide more space for the photo archive, and to add more bedrooms for staff who had been added for the conservation programs. All this coincided with funds made available by a US government cultural endowment disbursing monies that remained after the end of the PL 480 program and enabled the purchase of computers, electrical fixtures, and building materials in Cairo in Egyptian pounds. The project, directed by field director Peter Dorman, was engineered and managed by Bechtel Egypt, with project head Ahmed el-Refaei. A priority was to ensure that the renovations respected and maintained the architectural integrity of the buildings while having minimal impact on the operation of the Survey. The work took place in three phases over the summers of 1992 and 1993 with a completion date of October 1993—a very ambitious eighteen-month schedule. Photographer Sue Lezon and engineer James Riley spent summers at the house supervising the project.

In the first phase, the residence wing was thoroughly renovated. As the house closed in April 1992, Tina Di Cerbo supervised the emptying of all the rooms in the residence and the storage of the furniture and personal belongings in the garages—a process that took about two weeks. During the summer, all the electrical wiring was replaced, and solar panels were installed to provide hot water. The walls were repaired and covered with new stucco,

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Figure 12.36. The kitchen before renovation, 1991. Photo: T. Van Eynde.

Figure 12.37. The kitchen in 2024, showing the 1992 renovation. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

and all the floor tiles were replaced with near-replicas of the originals. All the bathrooms were updated using fixtures in keeping with the original building, and the fountain in the courtyard was resealed and restored to working order. This phase was supervised by Bechtel engineers Girgis Samuel (son-in-law of longtime Chicago House chief engineer Saleh Shehat) and Ayman Moussa. The entire complex was linked to the main electrical grid from the Aswan Dam, and a new generator was installed. New voltage regulators were put in place to protect computers and other appliances. The kitchen was renovated, the walls being covered with new white tile; the floors replaced; the ancient (and unpredictable) kerosene ovens exchanged for propane and electric ones; and stainless-steel sinks, better refrigerators and freezers, and even a small dishwasher installed (figs. 12.36 and 12.37).

In preparation for the staff's return, Di Cerbo supervised the cleaning of all the furniture, rugs, and kitchen equipment. Although a huge amount of work had been accomplished in a short amount of time, the staff returned to a house that was not quite ready. For two weeks, as the finishing touches

were made, they slept in Luxor hotels; although the kitchen was not yet fully functional, lunches were served at Healey House. The kitchen opened again on October 21, and the staff moved back into their renovated rooms.

The second phase of the work took place in fall 1992 and was focused on the outbuildings, so there was less disruption to the scientific work. Healey House was demolished and rebuilt with six guest rooms and a provision to add an upper floor with four additional suites (fig. 12.38). The workrooms and lavatories of the Egyptian workmen were renovated, as was the engineer's office. New clothes washers were installed in the laundry rooms in the southeast corner of the compound. The back gate, closed for years, was reopened. In the intervening years, the level of the city street had risen so much that a steep driveway ramp had to be built down to the level of the garden.

Di Cerbo supervised the cleaning out of decades of accumulated material in the many magazines, reorganizing them and emptying them of obsolete equipment and abandoned personal possessions of former staff members and colleagues. The areas were reorganized and labeled. In the process, she discovered vintage furnishings with the University of Chicago logo that were refurbished and returned to service. She also found archival correspondence that helped document the history of the house.

The third phase of the work focused on the library wing. The stacks and reading room were nearly doubled in area. In March 1993, in the space of eight days, Di Cerbo oversaw the move of more than 17,000 volumes into the residence wing, to be stored in two of the suites.* The empty library was described as looking like "a small railroad station with its high vaulted ceiling"[129] (fig. 12.39). The windows' original wooden-roller shutters were removed and preserved, and the room was extended to the east, adding badly needed space for books and tables for researchers (fig. 12.40). The engineers had to obtain an excavation permit for the new foundations. It stipulated that any artifacts discovered had to be reported to the Antiquities Ministry (none were found). The alcove was reconstructed farther east into the courtyard. A new concrete ceiling that imitated the original was built over the new space, and new lighting was installed.†

Some of the bedrooms with baths on either side of the library were renovated as offices, and one of the dark, cold "death suites" to the northeast was turned into the photo archive. An additional artist's studio was added to the east of the existing ones (fig. 12.41). The driveway and the tennis court were repaved, and the garden was restored.

The photo studio was fitted with new ventilation, custom sinks, electrical service (in both 110- and 220-volt supply), and a dilution pit for disposing of chemicals. House manager Paul Bartko built a computer network that, for the first time, enabled the transfer of data among the staff. This summer work was again supervised by Sue Lezon and James Riley.

Not surprisingly, the project was not completely finished by the time the staff returned in the fall, and the artists had to work from their sitting rooms in the residence wing. The last project was resurfacing the building's exterior, and the final coats of sandstone-color stucco were applied in December 1993.

This enormous project was done in a remarkably short period, especially given the problems that often arise when obtaining materials and labor in Upper Egypt. Considering how the scope of the work touched every corner of Chicago House, its impact on the scientific work was minimal.

In 1999, additional plumbing repairs were done in five of the bedroom suites, and the dining room walls were repaired and replastered. New phone lines were installed and buried in the garden. In 2000, to enhance security, the wall along the corniche was raised by a meter.[130]

* Oddly reminiscent of the idea in 1936 of moving the library into the residence wing (see "The Financial Crash and the Future of Chicago House, 1936–1940" earlier in this chapter).

† Some of the original ceiling-hung glass shades were broken by the contractors. Miraculously, exact replacements were located in Chicago and shipped to Luxor.

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Figure 12.38. "Healey House," as redesigned and built in 1992. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Figure 12.39. The library emptied of contents in preparation for construction, 1992. Photo: D. Darnell.

Figure 12.40. View of the library toward the east, with the expanded reading and stack area and the relocated alcove looking into the garden. Photo: Photo: W. R. Johnson.

Ray Johnson's fundraising efforts succeeded in naming the library the Marjorie M. Fisher Library in January 2008, in honor of her many contributions to Chicago House and its work (fig. 12.42). That same year, the photo archives were named in honor of Tom and Linda Heagy.[131]

The next year brought a less happy event. As part of the Egyptian government's Luxor development project that involved demolishing many vintage buildings to clear the Avenue of the Sphinxes, it was decided to expand the corniche, a project that would take 25 meters of the front yard of the house. Field director Johnson had the support of US ambassador Margaret Scobey and her staff (and many friends of Chicago House) in negotiations with the government. After nearly six months, a compromise was reached that cut the land loss to 14.5 meters. After the city removed four of the original fourteen tall palms that were planted in pairs in homage to the Luxor Temple Colonnade Hall, Chicago House built a new wall.* Di Cerbo oversaw the landscaping of the abbreviated front yard, which included a planting bed at the base of the new wall. Before long, foliage had grown up against the new wall, making it less obtrusive (fig. 12.43). Although the loss of land was a shock to those who were used to the larger front yard, the staff kept it in perspective.† Di Cerbo also designed a new guardhouse with a kitchen and a prayer area.

In 2013, Di Cerbo supervised the heightening of the eastern enclosure wall near the workshops and magazines, a move necessitated by new commercial construction to the east. All the work was done by Chicago House workmen rather than contractors hired from outside. She also oversaw the repaving of the driveway and kitchen renovations that included the installation of new plumbing, retiling the floor, and refinishing the woodwork.[132]

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the staff to evacuate in March 2020. The following year, the staff stayed home except for Di Cerbo, who took advantage of the opportunity to undertake further repairs to the library, repainting and installing new lights. She completely reorganized and labeled the library book stacks, installed a small exhibit of antique office/technological equipment and Chicago House ephemera in the library, and reworked a display of Harold Nelson's samples of rocks in the hallway. Other projects included

* Four of the palms were cut down to accommodate the new road, and another pair was marooned outside the wall. Today, only one of that pair survives.

† From 2008 to the present day, Chicago House has been in litigation with the Egyptian government to receive payment for the lost land. Partial payments were received in 2018 and 2023, and it is hoped further action will finalize the matter.

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Figure 12.41. The additional artist's studio (with higher roofline) added to the east during the 1992 renovation of the library wing. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

burying the computer and phone lines in the garden, repaving the walkways, and renovating the small courtyard outside the artists' studios.

Chicago House, now a hundred years old, has continued to serve the needs of the Epigraphic Survey. Over the past century, there have been times of reassessment and uncertainty about its future and fate due to financial or political pressures. But it has endured and been carefully cared for so it can continue its role as one of the most famous, hospitable, and productive of the "dig houses" in Egypt.

Putting Chicago House to Sleep

One routine that has not changed appreciably over the years is putting Chicago House into summer sleep mode from May until mid-October when the staff returns. The library and residence wings are closed, a process that usually takes about two weeks. In the early years at the new Chicago House, house manager Alfred Voneschen was supposed to open the house, but he was unable to withstand the heat in May and September, so the task fell to Nelson.* Architect Geoffrey Mileham opened the house in 1932 because he was in Luxor working on the construction of the new studios. Thereafter, engineer Tim Healey opened and closed the house.[133] In the few years when Healey was delayed by visa problems, Nelson again stepped in, commenting how little he liked the duty but still glad to be reminded of how much work it entailed. In 1951, field director George Hughes wrote of how onerous the task was, referring to it as "the beastly business of closing up."

* This incident was another reason for terminating Voneschen. Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted, "We should have a manager who can attend to opening and closing the house each season" (1 December 1932, CHP 1376).

Figure 12.42. Marjorie M. Fisher and Ray Johnson at the dedication of the Marjorie M. Fisher Library, January 2008. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

He hoped "we won't have to go through many more without a helper."[134] Lanny Bell handled the opening and closing himself, taking advantage of the late spring to use the then-closed library for his own research. Since 1989, artist/Egyptologist Di Cerbo, who has taken on an overall supervisory role for the physical plant, has carried out the task.

At the end of the season, staff members pack their personal possessions for storage. Each bookcase in the library is draped with cotton fabric (until recently, sheets of old newspaper were taped to the bookshelves) to protect the books from dust and pests (fig. 12.44). Rolling shutters are lowered over most of the windows, and the large windows in the artists' studios (fig. 12.45), kitchen, sitting room, screened porch, and some bathrooms are covered with wood. Naphtha balls and poison are strewn on the floors throughout the buildings to repel pests, water is drained from the pipes, and the electricity (except for an office in the back of the compound) is cut off. The forty full-time workmen are employed over the summer as guards and gardeners, working eight-hour shifts. They watch the house and garden (and the outdoor pets) until the process is reversed in the fall. In recent years, the Chicago House administrators, Samir Guindy and Samwell Maher, who live in Luxor, have ensured that the work is done.

Life at Chicago House, 1931-

One of the issues of life at the new Chicago House was who exactly was going to be living there. The last few years at the old house had been riven with factions—the German staff versus the Americans, the men with families versus those without, and others.

Hölscher and his staff lived at the old house for a season after the rest of the crew moved to Luxor.

Figure 12.43. The garden in front of the house after the expansion of the corniche in 2009. Photo: E. Teeter.

Figure 12.44. The library in sleep mode, with the bookshelves and tables covered with cotton cloths, 2024. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

But that arrangement did not last, and in the 1932 season, he followed Nelson to Luxor, where his two assistants lived, for the first three months during the winter.[135]

Resolving the issue of where families would live was more protracted, and the fact that the field director's daughter, Irene (with her nanny, Amelia, also called Melia), was at the house simply did not enter into the discussion. Irene was "in," but others may have been "out." One idea that kept resurfacing was whether the families should live at Gourna and the "singles" move to the new house. In retrospect, this idea seems illogical—the old house was falling apart and had only a few bedrooms, while the Luxor house was new and had more bedrooms than some local hotels.

Although Nelson was, in principle, in favor of not having families at Luxor, he understood the logistical problems, writing to Charles Breasted:

> The child business continues to worry me. I have been thinking of your idea of having married folk with children over here at Gurna. The more I think of it the more difficult the carrying out of such a plan seems to be. It would entail increased expense, for we should have to maintain two staffs when our new buildings would not be full, and men like Wilson would find it difficult to live in Gurna and have the temple they were working on in Gurna also, and still have the Library in Luxor. . . . If both households are to be maintained, we must have a business manager, who can keep books, carry on correspondence, supervise servants, look after engines and autos, and keep an eye on the garden. That will mean a man with a salary of at least $3000. I hope to have some constructive plan by the time I reach Chicago.[136]

As the new house became a reality and its size better known, the staff made more requests to bring family members—not unreasonable, considering that the head of each household would be away for at least six months. In January 1930, Nelson wrote to Charles Breasted about a sort of informal delegation, led by Wilson, "representing his family, the Chubbs and the Seeles" about the "question of provision for babies in the new house." The message Wilson carried, at least as related in the correspondence, is unclear. Nelson recounted:

> He [Wilson] wanted to know if any provision was going to be made in the new house for children. It seemed to those he represented that if there were to be children, there should be some place where they could have a play room in which they would not annoy the rest of the household, where they could have their meals by themselves and where there would be toilet accommodations they could use. He added he was not a very good advocate for he did not himself believe that children had a place on such an expedition.[137]

Figure 12.45. The artists' studios secured for the offseason, 2024. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

This report could be interpreted as Wilson and others wanting to have children at the house, with an area set aside for them so they would be neither seen nor heard. Nelson responded:

> On the other hand, I felt that we could not encourage the presence of children, or rather, I did not see how we could have children present. As for making special provision for them in the way of architectural modifications of the plant of the new building, that was out of the question. The most that could be done, if children were allowed in the new house, would be to use one of the ground floor bedrooms in the residence building for them if it were not needed for Expedition purposes. I added that in this matter I felt sure that both the Director and yourself agreed with me.[138]

He also wrote that Chubb "agreed with me," and that although he had not spoken with the Seeles, "no doubt . . . they will be equally reasonable. It is a relief to know that those of the staff especially interested seem to take a reasonable view of the matter."

But Nelson realized the matter was not settled, and "in the long run it is going to affect us, for our Americans, at any rate, are not going to forego family life for the opportunity to work here, at least not for long." Nelson discussed the issue with Kenneth Sandford,* who used a military analogy, suggesting "men below the rank of captain are not provided with married quarters, but must look out for themselves if they wish a home of their own with

* The codirector of the Oriental Institute Prehistoric Survey Expedition, 1926–33.

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children," without providing some guidance about what "rank" the Chicago House staff members might fall into.[139] The senior Breasted responded, citing the basis of their funding:

> I note your report on the question of housing children in our Institute quarters. I think that Sandford's reference to the analogy of the Army is very much in point. If the question arises again, I think it may be answered on the basis of the following fact. The support of the fieldwork of the Oriental Institute is contributed on certain conditions. Even on the most liberal interpretation, it would be impossible to construe these conditions as permitting the Institute to establish a system which would automatically permit the inclusion of entire families of members of the staff. Although as a casual matter, an occasional child may accompany its parents and live for a time in the Institute headquarters, this practice if enunciated as a policy would be in complete violation of the conditions under which the financial support of the institute is contributed.[140]

Breasted and Nelson thought that the transfer of the staff to new buildings in Luxor would furnish a solution to this difficulty. As Breasted communicated to Nelson:

> It will be easily possible for members of the expedition to find living quarters for their families, including both wives and children, in the neighboring hotels like the Savoy, or to keep house in some one of the modern buildings of Luxor. I hope that this interpretation under which our work is supported may not be construed as lack of interest on my part in the personal lives of our Institute group. On the contrary, I feel the deepest interest in the greatest solicitude for all of the young people, whether members of the staff, their wives, or their children, who are now connected with our Institute operations. I understand fully the difficulties by which these young people are confronted, and anything that is in my power to do which might aid them in meeting and solving these difficulties, I shall be only too glad to do. If this matter of children arises again or needs to be further discussed, it might be well for you to have my above statement typewritten or at least read to the young people who bring up the question. I would advise, however, that the whole question be allowed to die a natural death unless these young people bring it up again, and in such case I would either read to them or hand to them my above statement of the situation.[141]

Of course, the question came up again.

Ironically, most of Hunter's 1929 "schemes" for the building included a "sewing and children's room" on the second floor. And although Breasted argued that housing families would be against the wishes of the funder, Rockefeller himself seemed to be very family oriented; in 1923, he canceled a special trip with Breasted to see the recently discovered tomb of Tutankhamun because of his concern about the care of his children in his absence.[142]

But the discussion went on. Both Breasteds were staunchly antifamily and saw the move to the east as a way "to furnish a solution to this difficulty." Hölscher's request to bring his daughter was met with an emphatic no—"she should not be allowed to come in any capacity whatsoever"*—and if Hölscher insisted, "then he will have to take employment elsewhere." Charles Breasted, writing to Nelson, commented, "On every hand I am greeted by comments on the size of our household in Luxor. I want you to raise this whole question with the Director when you see him in Chicago. It is very easy I know to be emphatic when one is at such safe distance as Cairo; at the same time I am very much in earnest when I express my opinion regarding the Hoelschers, the Bollachers and all the others who wish to park their families in the comfort of our establishment for a payment of board which amounts to only a fraction of the actual cost to us."[143]

* Hölscher made the same request in February 1932 and was met with the same response: "No, under any circumstances."

They were more thoughtful in the case of John Wilson, who was so widely admired. "Deeply as I appreciate John Wilson's service to the Institute I must also point out that the Institute is offering him a career which he could not duplicate elsewhere. These days of training are his 'salad days' and neither he nor his wife must press us too hard with the question of the small daughter, otherwise the Director will come out flatly with the suggestion that wife and daughter be left in America next season."[144]

When the house opened for the 1931 season, its residents were Harold and Libbie Nelson with their thirteen-year-old daughter, Irene; John and Mary Wilson with their infant daughter, Margaret (Peggy); Keith Seele and his wife, Diederika; Siegfried Schott; Rudolf Anthes; artists Alfred Bollacher (with his wife, Augusta), Virgilio Canziani (and wife), Geoffrey Mileham (and wife), Anthony Chubb, and Laurance Longley; librarian Phoebe Byles; and house manager Alfred Voneschen. Photographer Henry Leichter lived in his own house near the hospital.

The move to the east gave Nelson the opportunity to make changes in the house staff. He wrote, "I also took advantage of the moving to get rid of two or three of the most useless members among the servants, including the old guard who has spent the last seven years eating opium out in the little house near the front door, and the cook, who drank too much. I am afraid the *suffragi*, Abd-el-Khader will have to go also, for he has become too lazy and self-important to be much use any longer. We shall miss his dignified presence in the dining room."[145] Early in the 1933 season, Nelson commented that he had reduced the number of house staff from seventeen to fourteen.[146]

Librarian Phoebe Byles made the move to the east, although there was uncertainty whether she wanted to be kept on and even whether Nelson would renew her contract. He commented, "She looks after the library very well, but I feel that more could be made of the position than has been done in her case. I should prefer not to change the librarians just at present, but after one more year it might be done to advantage. The subject of personality is at times difficult but is of minor importance as compared with other personal questions in the staff."[147] He wrote to Charles Breasted, "I have no complaint to make of her fulfillment of her duties when she is not laid up. She certainly looks after the library as a mother cares for her only child. I shall have a talk with her and wait to see what the coming season brings forth. Perhaps life here in Luxor may deal more kindly with her than life in Gurna. I think it would be less trying to the nerves. However, I now know where I stand and can act as seems best." But he was troubled by her frequent absences due to illness and more so by her advocating for a larger travel allowance.[148] Byles was later described by artist Donald Wilber as "an English maiden lady, possessor of a tart tongue."[149]

In the first season in the new house, Nelson added two more draftsmen, Geoffrey Mileham and Leslie Greener (fig. 12.46), bringing the number up to six—the most ever until 1960. Mileham is described as being "older, a naval architect who had traumatic experiences in the war." He had worked with Woolley and Randall-MacIver in Nubia, and in 1910 he had published a book, *Churches in Lower Nubia*. He came to Luxor with his wife after they made arrangements to leave their two teenage sons in England. Nelson was not terribly impressed with Mileham's drafting skills, and within two months, he considered not renewing his contract, but Mileham had other talents that made him a valuable member of the team. Living in the east meant the team needed to travel back west to Medinet Habu. In 1931, Nelson talked to Cook's Tours about boats, and that year he had an Evinrude outboard engine shipped from America and fitted to a secondhand boat from the Anglo-American Company. The two did not sync well, and the engine was not powerful enough in the Nile current. Mileham solved this problem by applying his naval experience and reseating the engine farther back in the boat for more power.

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Figure 12.46. Artist Leslie Greener, ca. 1959. Greener worked for the Survey from 1932 to 1935, in 1937, and again from 1958 to 1966. He wrote two popular books, *High Dam over Nubia* (1962) and *The Discovery of Egypt* (1966). Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Mileham made a much longer-lasting imprint on the house and its staff in 1932, when he designed and oversaw the construction of the new drafting studios (see "Early Days at the House: Settling In" earlier in this chapter). While he was in Luxor in June 1932, after the rest of the staff had departed, he also discovered that a workman named Sudani, who had been buying food and supplies for the house for "so long," was not paying the invoices of the local suppliers. Sudani had "fallen under the influence of life and Luxor," and of an Italian engineer whom Nelson found to be a "thorough scoundrel." Sudani had taken to frequenting the "red-light district of the town and . . . gone rapidly to the bad." He was fired for "embezzlement and falsification of accounts." Another staff member, a *farrash* (cleaner), was also dismissed. Nelson commented, "The move to Luxor has been very hard on the servants from Gurna who are subject to temptations they did not have across the river. I fear I must take drastic measures with them to save some others from going wrong."[150]

In spring 1932, the British engineer and all-around mechanical wizard John (Tim) Healey came to Chicago House, where he stayed until his mandatory retirement in 1970 (fig. 12.47). Later that year, when Nelson was facing budget cuts, he refused even to consider dismissing Healey, referring to him as "more useful than ever. There seems to be nothing that he cannot make or mend. He has saved us his wages several times over and gives us a sense of security that is worth a great deal. We must keep him under all circumstances." Healey got along well with Mileham, and they collaborated on servicing the Chicago House launch.

Healey was indeed indispensable—by early 1937, Chicago House had three autos, two boats,

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Figure 12.47. John (Tim) Healey, Epigraphic Survey engineer from 1932 to 1970. For years, he and his family lived in "Healey House" behind the main residence. He loved boats and had his own small sailboat on the Nile. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

"and other heavy machinery" all under his eye.[151] He was tremendously resourceful. In February 1933, he was sent to Alexandria to buy a second-hand launch.[152] In May 1933, he was entrusted with going to Cairo to "investigate" what autos were available because Nelson wanted to replace the aging station wagon with another Ford, and the old touring car with a new Chevrolet.*

The year after Healey was hired, he announced his engagement. This news gave Nelson pause on several accounts. One was that he would have to make "adjustments" to Healey's rooms "before we could accommodate a woman there." But a larger issue was how the fiancée, Adda, would fit in the social life of the house. Nelson rather snootily described her as a "a girl of the working classes from the north of England who has never been far away from home, eating with the other English staff and living as a full member of the staff. There are possibilities of trouble."[153] Part of his attitude may have been snobbishness, but he was also concerned about the number of British staff on the Survey (just as he was concerned about the number of Germans). In letters to Breasted, he commented that it was easier to hire British staff because they expected a lower salary than an American would demand, their travel costs were less, and at least in the case of technical draftsmen, there was not a lot of demand for them in the United Kingdom.†

Another key member of the nonscientific staff was the house/business manager Alfred Voneschen, who was engaged to replace Ilyas Khuri and had been Nelson's valued business manager at the old house. Voneschen had worked for Thomas Cook in Egypt, but more recently at the Hotel Victoria in Interlaken, Switzerland, where Charles Breasted interviewed him in 1930. Nelson preferred a local, someone who could go "into the market to find out prices, keep an eye on the sort of stuff available for the table, and doing many other little things of that kind by which we could effect a considerable savings. Someone from Egypt would know the language and people, which is a great advantage, and know local prices and the best places in which to buy. He would live out in the quarters with the mechanic and would not be a member of the household."[154] Nevertheless, Breasted hired Voneschen in early 1931, but he had to put off his arrival in Luxor because of illness. His offers to send his brother in his place were declined. At this point, Nelson considered engaging David Singer of the Winter Palace Hotel, "but he has a wife and a child two years old, so that rules him out as he insists he must have them with him."[155] The correct Voneschen brother arrived in Luxor in fall 1931 for the opening of the new house. Nelson was taken aback when, in the course of negotiations, Voneschen asked him about medical care. "He said that Cook, for whom he worked

* The station wagon was sold to artist Donald Wilber for $100 after his friends, who were "receptive to my [Wilber's] suggestion" mentioned to Nelson "that the appearance of the old car diminished the prestige of the Oriental Institute." See D. A. Wilber, *Adventures in the Middle East: Excursions and Incursions* (Princeton: Darwin, 1986), 22–23.

† Nelson's concerns were well founded when the British staff members were not granted visas due to the political situation between Britain and Egypt.

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when he was in Egypt some years ago, always took care of their people, excepting cases where the trouble was distinctly the individual's own fault, and he cited venereal disease." Nelson reported that "this remark at once brought up to me the fact that, with the employment of a regular hotel man, we shall probably have to wink at certain matters that have not come into consideration before, at least as far as I am aware."[156] Indeed, he had his reservations about Voneschen: "Of course, he has all the manners of a hotel clerk, which he probably will continue to have in Luxor, but in some ways, as they will inevitably divide him from the remainder of the household, they may be of service. As he knows many of the hotel people in Luxor, he will probably find his friends among them, rather than in the house. It would be well for him if he did not become too much a member of the household, but kept himself somewhat aloof."[157] After Nelson showed Voneschen the kitchen, the latter must have been critical, because Nelson wrote to Breasted that he was sorry they had not consulted "someone with intimate knowledge of hotel kitchens" before they built theirs. At this point, the major problems caused by soot from the insufficiently tall chimney and the settling of sewer gas had not even been brought up (see "Early Days at the House: Settling In" earlier in this chapter).

Voneschen was hired to manage both the business and the house, but the finances were so complicated that Nelson was not able to turn them over to him immediately, as he had hoped, so Nelson's secretary, Miss Pritchard, continued to handle them. Things were not so great on the house side, either. As Nelson wrote to Breasted: "Voneschen finds difficulty in disabusing his mind of the hotel attitude. He often speaks of our staff as though they were hotel guests. His lack of knowledge of the language is also a handicap."[158] Nevertheless, Nelson said that he got along well with Voneschen, although he irritated many members of the staff and he was "rough" with house staff. Nelson wrote, "He is working hard and is trying the best to make good. I hope he wins out, but we must not lose the 'family' feeling for any other advantage. I shall have another talk with him and endeavor to impress upon him more strongly the difference between this place and a hotel."[159] Oddly enough, Nelson had a backup plan to replace Voneschen with Mileham. What Mileham thought about this plan is not recorded.

In September 1933, Voneschen fell ill with an unspecified malady that Nelson initially blamed on "unwise eating" and that was exacerbated by not seeking medical care. He was disappointed that Voneschen did not inform him of the severity of his condition, probably because it might have "made a bad impression on the BOSS,"[160] and although Voneschen made a "valiant effort" to carry on, he was in constant pain. Many letters followed about the financial responsibility of the Oriental Institute for Voneschen's medical bills. His ailment was diagnosed as an almost-fatal case of amoebic dysentery.[161]

Mileham was designing and supervising the construction of the new studios in summer 1932, but that fall, when Nelson was asked to cut his budget, he pondered terminating him. He cited the obvious savings from reducing the number of artists from six to four, especially since the epigraphers just could not keep up with their output, but there were other, more personal reasons. He wrote to Charles Breasted that dismissing Mileham would present

> the easiest way of getting rid of a couple who are not desirable inmates of the establishment. I have not told you of the difficulties we have had in the household this season centering about the Milehams. This season has been the most difficult of all the seasons I have had here, and the center of it all is Mrs. M. ably seconded by Mr. M. I cannot have them back another year and would appreciate it if you would give me a general mandate to effect economies even by cutting personnel and I will use it as seems best. It would hardly be honorable to use it to dismiss Mileham and then replace him by somebody else.[162]

The next month, Nelson wrote,

> Mileham's case is very difficult. He has undoubtedly worked well and hard for the Institute as architect. . . . He certainly is trying to make himself as useful as possible with the view of retaining his job, for if he loses it, he will be in a very difficult situation indeed. On the other hand, he is not a first-class draftsman as are the other members of the staff. Nor will he ever reach their level of workmanship. He is too old for that and too shattered by his war experiences. His wife is also a complication. Before the end of the season comes, I hope to be able to discover whether his work as draftsman is usable. So far, with illness and withdrawal from drafting for other work, he has not produced a single finished plate.[163]

It did not help matters that Mrs. Mileham became very ill and had to be sent to Cairo for an emergency appendectomy, or that Mileham himself could not stand the hot weather of Luxor.

But the main complaints were about how the Milehams affected life at the house. Nelson informed Breasted that

> both Mr. and Mrs. Mileham are born gossips and have indulged in a great deal of intrigue. Mrs. Mileham has quarreled with everyone in the household and is distinctly disliked by most everyone here. Moreover, during the summer, while they were here alone, they ingratiated themselves not only with the servants, but also with the native population in town. As a result, with their assistance, our dirty linen, arising from the difficulties the Milehams have had with the household, have been washed in public until everyone in Luxor knows all about our internal difficulties. I have heard all sorts of reports from shop keepers, and even from the *maamur*,* with whom the Milehams are thick, about what goes on here. . . . They are a very dangerous couple and are undermining the position of the Institute here including that of the Field Director.

But Nelson was reluctant to fire Mileham because he was a good friend of Francis Llewellyn Griffith, a prominent and influential Egyptologist/philologist at Queens College, Oxford, who had recommended him to Nelson: "I do not want to give the Griffiths, especially Mrs. G.,† any more fuel against us in England. . . . Moreover, in Cairo where they are well known, and elsewhere in archaeological circles, they will do all the damage they can. This is the worst difficulty of the kind I have had to face and I cannot stand the present situation much longer. The only grounds on which his salary could not be discontinued would be one of expense with a direct mandate from you."[164] Letters passed between Nelson and the Breasteds about the sensitivity of the situation, the elder Breasted noting, "Mrs. Griffith has one of the worst acid tongues I have ever met, but she cuts no ice and we can let her talk. I should think the same about Mrs. Mileham. I think a great deal of Griffith, but the only people he ever recommended to me have proved awful nuisances in every case. He is no judge of men."[165] They decided to "keep on good terms with the Milehams" until he was dismissed at the end of the 1932 season on account of staff cuts.[166]

In September 1933, Voneschen was replaced by Horatio Vester (fig. 12.48), of whom Nelson wrote, "He is the greatest joy I have at present. I have been able to devote twice as much time to scientific work this season as in previous years, which would have been impossible without such a man as Vester."[167] Once a reporter for a New York newspaper, he had attended Columbia University; spoke Arabic, English, German, and some French; and "he knows the East."[168] And he did not have Voneschen's "hotel mentality." Within a month, Nelson reported, "The household seems more peaceful and homogeneous this year than for some years. . . . Vester has, so far, proved just the man I have been wanting for the

* Chief of police.

† Griffith's second wife, Nora (née Macdonald) Griffith.

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Figure 12.48. House manager Horatio Vester (middle) with artist Anthony Chubb (left) and "a Nazi spy" (right), 1935. Photo: Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Business Manager. He is very valuable, quiet and efficient without any fuss whatever. We all like him greatly."[169] Unfortunately, he stayed for only three full seasons.

With the dismissal of the Milehams and Voneschen, Nelson wrote, "The peace of heaven seems to have settled down upon the place."[170] He also reported to Charles Breasted, "As the years go by, and I see more and more of our situation, I am convinced that peace and harmony and unity in the household are the fundamental requirements for good work, and that anyone who does not fit in must be eliminated. For this reason I was glad to get rid of the Milehams and the Voneschens and would not object to seeing one or two more go, though none of the present staff is especially objectionable."[171]

The Egyptian staff also presented management challenges. Nelson wrote of the "servant" Mahmoud that "he is the only one of the servants whom we dismissed who protested in any way. . . . In his conversation with me on that occasion, he also asserted that he had been in our employ for 'fourteen' years. . . . I pointed out that the Expedition had been functioning for only twelve years, but it made no impression. I cannot do anything more for him without doing more for the others also. For several years he has been virtually a pensioner. Ali el-Reis says that money runs through his fingers like water. There is nothing more I can do for him."[172]

There are many references to illness among the scientific and house staff. The first lines of defense were Dr. Amin Solomon, the physician in charge of the Government Hospital (who treated the scientific and house/temple staff), and the doctor from the Winter Palace Hotel. Both would visit the house.* In some cases, a nurse was summoned from Cairo.

* Dr. Amin was very interested in the work of the Oriental Institute, and in November 1933, he asked Nelson whether he could look at a copy of Breasted's publication of the Edwin Smith Medical Papyrus (Amin to Nelson, 14 November 1933, CHP 1887, 1881). In 1934, Dr. Amin also purchased "an engine" from Chicago House (Amin to Vester, 2 November 1934, CHP 1889).

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Librarian Phoebe Byles was especially vulnerable to illness and incapacitated each season. The sickest of the staff members were transferred to the Winter Palace to take advantage of its in-house nursing staff. In 1939, Canziani spent five weeks there, leading to many letters about who was responsible for the bills.* The most common ailments were intestinal, but bronchitis also occurred, and Mrs. Mileham and Frank Allen both had appendicitis.[173]

There were also accidents, with workmen being treated for gashes from equipment. Nelson was badly injured in January 1932 when he stumbled and fell headlong into a wall of the temple, striking his left arm and leg against protruding stones. He received a deep gash in his head, cracked his arm, and sprained his wrist. He was treated in Luxor and then went to Cairo for X-rays.[174]

In 1936, the mood in the house was good despite constant negotiations about salary supplements to augment the worth of the devalued dollar. Nelson wrote, "The spirit of the household seems so far to be very good. Everyone is joining in cheerfully and accepting economies with a good will. . . . I do not know what I would have done this season without Mrs. Nelson. She has been of the greatest service to the Expedition, has done a not inconsiderable amount of cooking to add variety to the diet, has made jelly, and in various ways has kept things moving. Personally, I like our board better this season than before."[175]

In the 1936 season, the house had no manager, forcing the Nelsons to take charge again. Nelson wrote to Wilson:

> I find that it is difficult to do much work here without someone to run the place and Mrs. Nelson cannot do any more than she is now doing. In fact, with the extra work that has fallen on her this year, including a not inconsiderable amount of cooking, she is already quite tired. And without a more expensive cook than we can afford, there would be waste and also dissatisfaction among the staff unless she helped out as she is doing. The atmosphere of such a place does not fit in with the ordinary excavation camp way of living. We have all become too soft in this environment.[176]

Popular social activities included reading, tennis (fig. 12.49), and board games, especially mah-jongg. Boat trips down the Nile with an "elegant high tea" served by Mrs. Nims were a nice diversion.[177] But too much leisure activity among the scientific staff was a matter of comment, as in February 1939 when Nelson criticized Charley Nims for playing games with the women in the evening rather than doing research in the library.[178] Concerned about leisure time, Nelson wrote to Wilson, "I am going to insist next season that all the ladies of the household have some sort of tasks connected with the Institute while they are in residence here. This business of idle women about is very unfortunate. I shall settle the matter definitely after leaving here and communicate with all the staff by

* Among them Nelson to Wilson, 7 March 1939, ISAC Museum Archives; Wilson to Nelson, 12 March 1939, ISAC Museum Archives; Nelson to Wilson, 17 March 1939, ISAC Museum Archives. Canziani spent thirty-six days at the Winter Palace for an unspecified illness that was serious enough that it "would not allow of your going to Cairo." In the dispute about the bills (which totaled £E82.25, then equaling an astounding $5,184), Canziani claimed that he wanted to stay at Chicago House where his wife could nurse him, that the nurse at the Winter Palace did nothing other than take his temperature twice a day, and that he was "obeying to your order" to move to the hotel. He claimed, "Had I remained in the house, my wife was ready to come at any moment," although at that time, she was in Cairo for an unspecified "treatment." He wrote bitterly to Nelson, "I cannot believe that a sudden feeling of hatred has born in you against me, but the fact is that you are pushing me to despair. This treatment which I have in no way deserved, puts me in a state that will certainly not hasten the end of convalescence" (13 March 1929, ISAC Museum Archives). John Wilson finally agreed that the Oriental Institute would pay for Canziani's stay at the Winter Palace (Wilson to Nelson, 31 March 1929, ISAC Museum Archives).

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Figure 12.49. Leslie Greener, Donald Wilber, Robert Martindale, and Horatio Vester on the Chicago House tennis court, ca. 1933. Photo: Chubb Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

letter.[179] Perhaps in response, Myrtle Nims learned to bind books, a valuable service she engaged in over her nearly thirty years at Chicago House (fig. 12.50).

The daily routine was interrupted in January 1937 when the recently crowned King Farouk visited Luxor for five days. Nelson related that the town was "marvelously decorated. . . . All the streets through which the king will pass are festooned with flags strung across the street at short intervals. The houses are many of them outlined with lights. Two large gold crowns are installed in front of the Winter Palace where the royal steamer will tie up." Bands played in the streets, and a great sense of national pride was in the air. Chicago House was floodlit, and new Egyptian and American flags flew from the two buildings.[180] Nelson was to show Medinet Habu to the king when he came for lunch, and new lights were installed in the temple's treasury to show off the brightly colored reliefs. Unfortunately, the king showed up late—at 4:00 p.m.—and spent very little time at the temple.

Getting Around

The move to Luxor necessitated reliable transportation across the river and from the west bank to Medinet Habu. With the house now in the east, the team needed not only a reliable boat (so as not to have to depend on the local ferry or hire small private boats) but also a vehicle to travel from the river to Medinet Habu. Crossing the Nile in the days before the High Dam could be dangerous; in early fall, toward the end of the inundation, the Nile had strong currents and was sometimes, according to Nelson, too dangerous to attempt crossing.[181] As he wrote to Charles Breasted, "I would like to have the boat available for use by the beginning of October, if possible, or as soon thereafter as we can have it. Crossing the river when the water is high is always unpleasant, and the boat would save much time and trouble."[182]

The discussion about buying a boat started the summer before the team moved to the new house.

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Figure 12.50. Myrtle Nims at her book-sewing frame, ca. 1950. Photo: C. Nims.

Nelson and Charles Breasted considered boats of different sizes and configurations built in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Egypt. In August 1931, Breasted suggested they buy a simple, flat-bottomed rowboat similar to the ones that Cook's Tours used for sending its crew ashore, but fitted with an outboard engine. They regarded this idea as experimental, Breasted writing, "If after a season's use, the outboard motor does not prove adequate, we can reconsider the whole question of a regular specially built motor boat."[183]

In March 1932, Nelson bought a "heavy steel ferry boat" from the Anglo-American Nile & Tourist Company of Cairo that was powered by an Evinrude outboard engine sent from America. Initially, it worked well. Nelson commented that because the engine was more powerful, they could safely cross the river earlier in the season and thus start work at Medinet Habu sooner.[184] But by July 1932, the boat was judged "not a success," and despite Mileham's adjusting the position of the engine and Healey's installing flotation chambers, Breasted was concerned about the team's safety.[185] He wrote, "I have always regarded the ferry crossing at Luxor as dangerous when a high wind is blowing against the current and I hope that no risks will ever be run in crossing the river with any of our staff."[186] The final straw came in November when the drive shaft broke for no apparent reason.[187]

In December 1932, after much discussion, the elder Breasted authorized the purchase of a "really good launch." Healey was again dispatched to Alexandria, where he found "just what we needed"—a 20-foot steel motor launch, named *Tich* (fig. 12.51). It had an inboard engine midships, with cockpits fore and aft to seat ten, a canvas sun awning, and wooden brightwork. Like the steel ferry boat, it was purchased from Anglo-American Nile & Tourist Company. It was delivered to Luxor in March 1933.

In June 1933, the Survey purchased another motor launch, the 28-foot, steel-hulled *Ramesses III* (fig. 12.52), made by George Spicer in Middlesex,

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Figure 12.51. The motor launch *Tich*, ca. 1934. Photo: H. Leichter.

Figure 12.52. The launch *Ramesses III* moored at the bottom of the embankment in front of Chicago House, 1960. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

United Kingdom.* It, too, had an inboard engine, and was fitted with one wooden seat in the stern, another forward of the skipper's seat, six wicker-work chairs, and a green canvas awning. Nelson also ordered a "steel plate landing raft" to which the boats could moor in front of the house. The boats flew a University of Chicago flag at their stern (fig. 12.53).

The constant back-and-forth across the Nile also necessitated more and better vehicles. Chicago House had a station wagon and a touring car, both of which, by 1933, needed to be replaced. That May, Healey was in Cairo looking at new cars. Nelson wanted an American car—either a Ford or a Chevy. He especially wanted a new station wagon, but that body was not available. Although the dealer offered to make one for them, Nelson was dubious and looked elsewhere. He finally had a "woody" body built in the United States for $800 and shipped to Cairo, where it was mounted on a chassis.[188] He also wanted to replace the "old touring car" with a Chevrolet.[189]

Figure 12.53. The University of Chicago flag on the stern of the *Ramesses III*. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

Life at Chicago House in the Postwar Years

When the Nelsons returned to Luxor in 1945, they found the house in disarray and started making inventories of missing supplies (see "Chicago House after the War" earlier in this chapter). It would be only the Nelsons and Healey at the house that season. Nelson described life at the house as

> living in a sort of makeshift manner. The battery on the car is effective only part of the time period. We have to turn off the lights early in the evening because the battery is gone and therefore we use lamps. The Frigidaire does not work for lack of current, so we buy ice and keep a block in the ice box. We have just enough silver to keep us going and live in hopes that the bathroom fittings will hold out the season. The well has filled with sand and meanwhile we have to use city water, which costs its weight in money. The revetment in front of the house has partially slid down into the river while we hope it will not go all the way before the water is low enough for it to be repaired. It is a strange sort of life, but I still have hopes of affecting enough repairs to enable the work to be resumed by next fall.[190]

The 1946 season was to be Nelson's last as field director. The epigraphic staff consisted of Charles Nims (with his wife, Myrtle) and Richard Parker. The situation with the artists was quite different—there was an almost entirely new slate. Gone were Alfred Bollacher, who had been with the Survey from its inception in 1924 through the 1935 season, and Virgilio Canziani, an artist from 1926 through 1938. Stanley Shepherd, who had worked for two seasons before the house closed, returned and was joined by new artists Douglas Champion and Mark Hasselriis. Champion was to become one of the old guard, staying with the Survey through the 1957 season. Hasselriis did not mesh well with the other members of the Survey, and his drafting skills were not up to par. Nelson described him as "inclined to hold forth authoritatively on all sorts of egyptological subjects,

* The *Ramesses III* is currently stored on the roof of the garage at Chicago House.

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and his accounts of his own doings sometimes smacks strongly of romance."[191] Indispensable engineer Tim Healey also returned, joined by his assistant, Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed Abd el-Rahman, who was to work closely with him for the next twenty-four years.

Nelson was able to report, "All our staff are well and seem to be quite contented and happy together. Domestic harmony is fairly easy at this time of year; it is the hot, dry season that tests our essential unity."[192] He commented that after the last season it was a "pleasant adjustment" to be around people again, and he took pleasure in reviving the expedition rather than just repairing the physical plant.[193] But he noted that some of the same illnesses recurred: "As is usually the case with new people arriving in Egypt, everyone's internal workings went on the blink, where they have, in most cases, been ever since. Parker and Nims are confined to their rooms, and the kiddies are, or ought to be, on a strict diet." He added, "Everyone walks about with the droops and fishy eyes."[194] But far more serious than the intestinal upsets was a major cholera epidemic that hit Egypt in 1947. It was so bad that the trains ceased to run. Parker, Nims, Ricardo Caminos, new epigrapher George Hughes, Shepherd, Champion, Evelyn Perkins (Nelson's assistant), and Healey—plus some spouses—were forced to travel from Cairo to Luxor by air. Amice Calverley of the Abydos Expedition made arrangements for Chicago to ship enough doses of cholera vaccine to vaccinate the staff of both expeditions, along with their Egyptian staff and their families.*

The Nelsons left Luxor at the end of April 1948, sailing from Alexandria on May 1 rather than flying because of the amount of luggage. He wistfully wrote to his friend Doris Fessler, "I shall miss the facilities for work that we have here. One can do twice as much here as is possible in Chicago. Sometimes I never want to see the place again, and sometimes I know I shall miss it greatly. . . . Mrs. Nelson will be delighted to say goodbye to Egypt. I have not yet been across the river, but oscillate between the house and the temple at Karnak. I think I must go across to the other side at least once before I return." One of the last items on his to-do list was, unfortunately for us, destroying "long files of letters from the office."[195]

In 1947, Richard Parker assumed the duty of field director. The Nelsons were at the house that season, under uncomfortable circumstances, as Nelson worked on the Hypostyle Hall reliefs for a final season (see "The Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, 1938–1940, 1947–1950" in chapter 5). The transition with the house was not so smooth. Parker's wife did not come to Egypt, so the question arose who would act as *mudira*. In May 1946, Parker wrote to Nelson asking who would take over the cooking and housekeeping when Mrs. Nelson left the job, a seemingly strange question for an incoming director to ask his predecessor. He further asked, "Does Mrs. Nelson want to be rid of this job next season [1947], or will she carry on while you are both there? If she wants to stop soon, it looks as though the only available candidate will be Mrs. Nims. I am hoping that the year after next Mrs. Parker will be able to get out to Egypt, in which case she will, no doubt, wish to take over." One can imagine that neither Libbie Nelson nor her husband was eager for her to resume the difficult job, considering the lack of support they were receiving from the university (see again "The Hypostyle Hall" in chapter 5). Parker mentioned that a "Miss. S has just volunteered for the job.† She assures me that soon after taking office, all our troubles will be over and so will the Expedition."[196] In the early part of the 1946 season, Mrs. Nims and Mrs. Hughes took over

* Due to "a complicated state of international exchanges" of the Egypt Exploration Society, from 1947 the Abydos Expedition was administered from Chicago, and Calverley was appointed an associate of the Institute (1947 draft agreement, ISAC Museum Archives).

† Possibly a Miss Skjonsberg referred to in a letter from Nelson to Fessler, 25 January 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.

Mrs. Nelson's "tea duties,"[197] and Mrs. Nims, "the only available candidate," was tapped to assume the kitchen duties. When Mrs. Parker came to Luxor, she brought the couple's two children and took over house duties for the remainder of Parker's short tenure.

The house still lacked some basic furnishings that had been stolen during the war. In February 1948, Charles Wilkinson and Walter Hauser of the Metropolitan Museum came to Luxor to close their dig house in the Asasif (see fig. 12.2) and dispose of its contents. Parker wrote to Oriental Institute director Thorkild Jacobsen, letting him know that this was a good chance to replace missing furnishings: "It is a wonderful opportunity for us, however, to stock up on equipment which we badly need, blankets, sheets, pillow-cases, towels, table linens, china, and so forth. We have been promised first pick of everything and this will enable us to avoid the annual chore of taking household goods from Chicago to Luxor." He commented that the material also included furnishings from the Metropolitan's Lisht house and from the de Garis Davies and Howard Carter houses. The libraries were also to be sold, and Parker hoped to get books for Chicago House, noting that the books would be available to the members of the staff, including two full sets of the Cairo Museum catalog.[198] Several weeks later, as Metropolitan House was being cleared out, Wilkinson and Hauser gave the Survey "a munificent gift, between 2,500 and 3,000 mounted photos of the royal and private tombs and of Deir el Bahari temple," all the work of Harry Burton. They preferred to give them to Chicago rather than to the Department of Antiquities because they thought they would be stored in better conditions and made more widely available to "any interested scholar."[199]

Relations with the Egyptian staff, which were damaged during the war by anti-American sentiments, were not so easily repaired. In early December 1945, sugar was discovered in the gas tanks of the Survey's vehicles. Nelson wrote to Wilson, "This sugar business was a piece of pure sabotage, done out of spite and ill will. It must have been the work of one of our own servants, probably the same who perpetuated the thefts. The theft was, to my mind, much less distressing. We have treated our employees well and paid them well and are repaid by the grossest disloyalty and hate." Although he excused the thefts, again blaming them on "the deep economic distress of the last few years, the demoralization and confusion of the war, the undoubted effect of the Italian radio propaganda on the prestige of the British and the Americans before the German defeat, the recklessness engendered by the malaria when nothing apparently seems worthwhile for tomorrow all would die, these account for the theft when the opportunity offered." But he felt differently about the sabotage of the cars, saying that the political situation did "not account for the sugar." This event evoked an unusually angry and discouraged response from Nelson: "I am personally glad that my stay in Egypt is limited. When this place is restored and functioning again, I shall be glad to shake the dust of this land off my feet. Don't conclude from this that I am in the dumps or sorry that I came out. It is nothing of the kind. But I am quite satisfied that I have retired."[200]

The rise of Egyptian nationalism and the new sense of independence and empowerment led to difficulties with some of the Egyptian staff who had been terminated due to budget cuts.[201] Hughes wrote, "Even our boys feel the oats so much that they banded together and wrote a plea to the General [Naguib] himself as well as local officials demanding that these foreigners be made to pay them their due, which of course their enthusiasm and imagination put no limits to. Of course, I received the most cordial consideration from the local official who had to look into the matter and he expressed his surprise and gratification at how well they were being treated already."[202] In 1953, some former employees sued for unfair termination, causing Hughes to feel "increasingly worried and harassed." He ascribed

the trouble to "some bar-room lawyer or agitator [who] has gotten ahold of a few of our men who pressed the others into signing complaints about pay. I have to have a lawyer regularly to ward off nuisances. They have been told by the labor office two or three times that all has been inspected and is in order, but it does no good." He vowed that the lawsuits would never wear him down, and he proceeded to fire one man and prepare the papers for a second's dismissal.[203] Even pensioning off one of the original Survey staff members because he had lost his eyesight required a huge investment in legal services. Hughes commented that the arguments of another employee were undermined by his claim to have worked at Chicago House in 1945 or 1946—"nobody can convince him that he didn't come to work here in 1945 or 1946 when the place was closed."[204]

Hughes wrote of the increasing administrative burden placed on the field director. A new regulation required exit visas to be obtained for anyone leaving the country, but the visas were available only in Cairo, which meant days waiting in a hotel for the documents. The censor also needed to apply his seal to "all one's papers, photographs and drawings," a procedure that was a cause for worry because of the potential delays.[205] Further headaches were caused by a regulation aimed at securing hard currency, mandating that one had to cash all of one's traveler's checks within fifteen days, even if the person was a registered foreign resident.[206]

By the late 1940s, Chicago House had become a popular stopping place; in February 1948, Parker complained that he felt "more like an inn-keeper than anything else." Guests paid PT 80 a night, and by early February, he had collected more than £E100, an indicator of how busy they were.* Parker mused, "I am beginning to be afraid that in official circles we are suspected to be running a small hotel without a license."[207] Some, such as I. E. S. Edwards of the British Museum (and his wife), stayed two full weeks. The accommodation of colleagues and "friends" of the Oriental Institute was complicated by a regulation implemented in February 1948 that all foreign guests to the house had to be reported to the authorities, necessitating yet more paperwork.

Very special nonpaying guests—Princess Faiza, the sister of King Farouk, her husband, and "a small entourage"—visited the house in January 1948 to "inspect the library and to have tea,"[208] the first members of the royal family to visit the house.† The pair were judged to be "charming and gracious" and "they both dislike the formality which dogs their footsteps." The visit, which was a total surprise to the American embassy, was widely covered in the Arabic and English press. Parker attributed the visit to "our very cordial relations with the local officials."[209] Several years later, Luxor turned out for the visit of Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia and President Nasser as part of Egypt's courting of the nonaligned powers. Nims wrote, "The roads on the other side have been smoothed out and the temples cleaned up all over. I do not think we have seen them so free of incidental debris for many a year, and we hope they will be kept that way."[210]

George Hughes (fig. 12.54) replaced Parker in January 1949 when the latter accepted a position at Brown University. Hughes was a great letter writer, and he penned long, sprightly, and informative letters to Oriental Institute director Carl Kraeling and former field director Harold Nelson, as well as extremely amusing (and dishy) ones to his friend Doris Fessler at the Institute.

Hughes seemed to be invigorated by the responsibility he had assumed, writing, "Everything is

* By 1959, the rate had risen to £E1.75 for regular guests and £E1.10 for "academic" guests, plus 10 percent for a baksheesh fund to "stop the household servants from hanging around hungrily for a tip" (Wilson to Kraeling, 19 January 1959, ISAC Museum Archives). In 1965 (under Nims), the rate was unchanged.

† King Farouk visited Medinet Habu in January 1937 but did not come to Chicago House.

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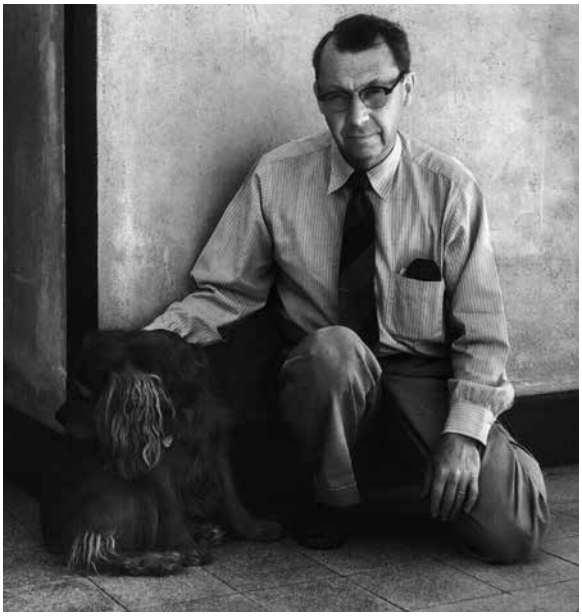

Figure 12.54. George Hughes, ca. 1954. Photo: Helen and Jean Jacquet Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

going well here. I believe that everyone is happier and the mood of the household is congenial this year, more so than last. We are getting more work done with less people, I know, but it seems I am losing ground even though I am in the office or temple from 7 A.M. to 11 at night. I get up to our rooms perhaps an hour before dinner if lucky, about 12 hours after I leave it, and then get there to sleep. But I have rarely in my life felt more able to keep up the pace."[211]

But it was not all rosy. In March 1951, Hughes wrote to Fessler of his conflicts with director Kraeling:* "Between you and me only, there seems to be an attempt to put the director at Luxor (and his wife) over a barrel. The honeymoon of last year is over. It has looked black lately and still remains to be seen whether the new man (and junior in most cases) establishes a reasonable but unquestionable authority and respect or not. The point is, Doris, I am not an administrator but had hoped to be a scholar and colleague who gently steered the course. Perhaps an administrator has to crack the whip and make no explanations."[212]

The lead-up to the 1952 revolution against the British affected the Luxor group. A twenty-four-hour guard was placed at the door, as cars and trucks passed the house with loudspeakers blaring for "English and Americans to get out." As Nelson probably understated, "Our English staff are a bit edgy." Engineer Healey and his family moved from their separate house into the main residence. Healey was so concerned that he tried to send his wife and son home,† but then reconsidered because the situation in Cairo was so unsettled. As early as January 1951, Hughes had reassured Kraeling, "The international difficulties, while not affecting our work at all, have resulted in an almost complete dearth of tourists and other people who were going to stay with us." He was also attuned to the "hardship" the political situation had on the locals, "who have so heavily depended on the tourist trade and who have been seeing it revive after the big war."[213]

By the 1951 season, the security situation had improved, and Hughes wrote to Chicago, "Personally I do not believe that there is anything to get panicky about at the moment and shall not leave if there is any possibility at all of going on with our work. . . . The people of Luxor and the officials are our friends." He also noted that two British guests, Bertha Moss and Ethel Burney (both editors of the *Topographical Bibliography*), "have taken the barest notice of the whole business."[214] In spite of the political situation and Hughes's prediction that visitors would be wary of traveling to Egypt, colleagues continued to stream to Chicago House. As Hughes wrote in March 1951, "We are proud to be a kind of Mecca for Egyptologists and Orientalists generally. Some twenty-seven persons have stayed at the house this season, most of

* See further in "Richard Parker, George Hughes, and the Postwar Years, 1945–1963" in chapter 3.

† In 1946, Healey and his wife Adda were divorced, and in 1950 he married Doris Weatherall. Her son, Valentine, was then three years old. In 1952, they had another son, Derek, known as "Digger." They all lived at Chicago House. The Healey family archive, donated to the Epigraphic Survey by Valentine Healey, has many candid photos of the family in Egypt.

whom would qualify as visiting firemen. . . . We had the pleasure of having the dean of Egyptologists, Sir Alan Gardiner, with us for a few days. It was something of an event also for the two would-be demotists like Charley and myself to have Professor S.R.K. Glanville of Cambridge with us briefly." Other guests included V. Gordon Childe, William (Bill) Stevenson Smith of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and ARCE, and Peter L. Shinnie, commissioner of archaeology for the Sudan government.[215]

Charley and Myrtle Nims described the daily routine. The work week was six days long. They woke up at 6:00 a.m. and departed for the temple at 7:00. Lunch was at 12:30 p.m.; then they worked at the house until tea at 5:00 and had dinner at 7:00. For recreation they read, listened to the radio, played games, and, "when there are guests in the house for a short while, we enjoy spending evenings talking to them." In reference to the number of visitors, "If all the Egyptologists who have written us that they are coming to Luxor this winter were present at the same time, we could hold an international conference."[216] The house was described as "full of flowers, the orange and tangerine trees with fruit that would be ripe for Christmas, and the garden full of radishes, tomatoes, the best sweet corn ever." Thanksgiving featured turkey and pumpkin and mince pies. Harold Nelson was at Chicago House in November 1952, and there was a party celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday (fig. 12.55).[217] Other diversions included longer trips, such as a multicar convoy to the Red Sea.

Figure 12.55. Group photo in the garden of the Luxor Hotel, November 1952, when Nelson returned to Egypt for the last time. The gathering includes most of the field directors to that time. Back: unidentified, Charles Nims, Ibrahim Mohammed, unidentified, George Hughes, Tim Healey, Michael Ross Apted, two unidentified. Seated: Irene and Geraldine Champion, Mary and John Wilson, Harold Nelson, Maurine Hughes, Myrtle Nims. A handwritten Christmas and New Year's greeting from Ibrahim Mohammed to Healey's two sons is written on the back of this copy of the print. Photo: Healey Collection, Epigraphic Survey.

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The late 1950s and the 1960s were difficult times in Luxor. There was an oil shortage, and many foods were scarce. Hughes bought as much oil as he could; through a combination of buying in quantity and paying in cash, he was able to purchase enough kerosene that he could divide it among the staff, who had not been able to obtain any on the regular market for two weeks. He commented that in the current economic situation, "things in general are hitting them [the staff] hard."[218]

Mary Wilson, who served as *mudira* in 1958 when her husband, John Wilson, substituted for Hughes while he was on medical leave (fig. 12.56), left a rather different image, at least for that year, describing bountiful supplies (other than vegetables, which were scarce because the land was still under the inundation). But she wrote of tree- or bush-growing foods (sweet melons, dates, bananas, and oranges) bought locally, and carrots, beets, kohlrabi, radishes, kale, lettuce, wax beans, celery, tomatoes, and eggplant, all grown from seeds that Mrs. Hughes brought from Chicago. Main courses were of lamb, chicken, fish, young *gamousa* (water buffalo), or rabbit. Dry goods continued to be in short supply, especially tea and rice. They obtained other groceries (macaroni, crackers—"biscuits" to them—chocolate, canned fruits, table salt, and brown sugar) from Cairo.

Feeding a large staff was difficult. Mrs. Wilson records that they had four Americans, two Brits, one Russian, and an Australian, many of whom had their own likes and dislikes—some refused cooked cheese; others, onions or sweet potatoes; and the Russian (Floroff) "finds it against his religion to eat pigeons."[219]

She also left the most vivid description of the house staff, calling Taya (fig. 12.57), the head cook, "the best of the lot" and praising his three-layer chocolate cake, puddings, and cookies.* She had less praise for the headwaiter and buyer, whom

Figure 12.56. Christmas 1958, when Wilson substituted for Hughes. Back: Myrtle Nims, Reg Coleman, Leslie Greener, Alexander Floroff, Charles Nims. Front: Tim Healey, Ricardo Caminos, Mary and John Wilson. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

she described as her "bête noire." They played cat and mouse with each other over the purchases and accounts, and "the struggle to get the sugar and tea I dole out into our bowl or our pot instead of his is an ever-losing battle." Other members of the kitchen staff included *suffragi* (butler) Shafei (who retired only a few years before his death in 2003) and second cook Abdel Zaher (who retired in 1994), both of whom joined the staff in the days of Hughes and Nims. By the late 1980s, Shafai was so wizened that he looked like a mummy in his white galabia. His "calm dignity and deadpan expression"[220] always gave a hint that he knew everything that was going on. There was a single woman on the house staff—the "washer-lady," whom Mrs. Wilson saw only when she came into the house to receive her soap from the storeroom. All the storerooms were

* Taya continued as head cook until shortly before his death in 1994; see *CHB* 6, no. 3 (1995), 3.

Figure 12.57. Presentation of the Thanksgiving turkey by the kitchen staff, 1989. Left to right: Abdel Zaher, Gamal el-Shafei, Shafei, Taya. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

kept locked, and the *mudira* was the keeper of the keys. Mary Wilson worked with the house manager, Hassan, to issue the desired supplies. She recalled, "The first requirement is to be able to know where your keys are at all times."[221]

John Wilson left his own humorous and informative description of the field director's duties. He refers to the long-standing routines of running the house, or *tarteeb*, which he suggested should be translated as "ritual" because it was so holy and unchanging. Under this enduring tradition, the field director is met with "bowing and scraping" and is addressed as "Your Honor, the Director." But "the sacred dogma which states the relationship solemnly asserts that the master govern the servants . . . is absolutely false. In the daily routine it is the servants who direct and redirect the masters." He recalled how his *reis* really controlled his contact with local officials. And God forbid that the director walk six blocks to the police station. The *tarteeb* dictates that he be driven (certainly not drive himself) "in the stately loneliness of the back seat of the car." After such appointments, he described himself as a "puppet [who] has made his dance," under the direction of the *reis* puppet master. He accepted this with good grace because it was the tradition, and he further expressed great affection for the Egyptian staff, many of whom had been with the Survey for more than thirty years.

The struggle to keep the house supplied led Hughes to complain to Kraeling about the "six supernumeraries eating off us"—these being the wives and children of staff members, particularly the British ones. He further complained that "with the prospects of most of the workers being in Nubia part of the time, the spectacle of running this place mainly to provide board and lodging for Commonwealth wives and kids, who do not turn a hand to help even Maurine [Mrs. Hughes] in the house, is fantastic. Besides I sure could use that $1300 it took to get 'em here."[222] The matter of wives at the house had become an issue the previous year when Kraeling proposed that the Institute not pay for travel expenses for spouses; although Wilson objected, the policy stood.[223]

In January 1964, Maurine Hughes passed the responsibilities of running the house to Myrtle Nims. Having been at either the Saqqara House or in Luxor since 1935 with the exception of 1939 and the war years, she was well aware of the routine. Taking the long view, it is ironic that she ended up being *mudira*, for shortly before the war, Nelson criticized her several times for "moping around the house" and generally not adding to the atmosphere.[224] She rose to the duty, although it was not always easy—it was difficult to provide for a huge household in Egypt then. In 1964, Charley Nims commented that the butcher shops were closed three days a week, but "so far we are better off than Cairo; we have been able to get some sort of meat each day. Even some of the hotels in Cairo are having a difficult time getting ahold of meat for their dining rooms."[225] In early October 1965, he reported, "The three meatless days are still in force, and only the de luxe hotels serve meat on these days. The others serve fish or chicken, neither of which is readily available in Luxor. We have found no

canned meat. But until we place our orders with the grocery here, and until they get to Luxor, we cannot be really sure how things will work out." Somehow, Chicago House managed to find "some sort of meat each day." The house manager continued to order much of the house's food from Maison Thomas, Service à Domicile in Cairo, but those deliveries also became unreliable.[226]

Perhaps unfairly, considering the food shortages, Mrs. Nims gained a reputation for running a meager household, but she also took pride in not spending all of her annual food budget from PL 480 funds each year.[227] She was parsimonious—literally so, as she was the wife of an ordained minister (as was Maurine Hughes). She earned the legendary nickname "Two-Cookie Nims" for her sparse spread at teatime and her eagle eye on who ate what. Labib Habachi later described the atmosphere at Chicago House then as a "monastery." There was very little alcohol, no smoking, and few social gatherings or contact with other field missions in Luxor. Bedtime was 9:00 p.m.[228] Mrs. Nims kept any gifts of alcohol locked in a magazine. One person recalled that William Kelly Simpson (or, in another version of the story, artist Leslie Greener) managed to extract a bottle of whiskey or scotch and proceeded to enjoy it. Then, to cover his tracks, he refilled it with strong tea (including leaves), which was discovered with dismay the next time drinks were officially served. Charley Nims, a nondrinker, just assumed it had gone bad.[229] Atteya Habachi later commented, "I found the atmosphere far too Victorian for my taste. I never dreamed that it would one day become my second home."[230]

Myrtle Nims was worried about leaving the house when Charley retired because she had no successor to train and to entrust with the many duties of the *mudira*. Nims himself expressed some skepticism that Leila Wente, who had an academic career of her own, was interested. Once Ed Wente became field director in January 1972, Leila indeed showed little interest in the job or in Luxor overall, and she visited briefly only twice. In the absence of a *mudira*, Wente was allowed to hire a housekeeper paid from PL 480 funds. She did well; as Ethel Schenk of the Oriental Institute commented, "She must be a genius if the staff now finds the food generally acceptable."[231]

During Wente's tenure, Labib Habachi, who had a long association with the Survey, started spending more and more time as a resident of the house. From 1973 on, he became a permanent fixture until the year before his death. His many contacts with the authorities, and of course his Arabic, were invaluable to the field director. He spent his time working on his reports in the alcove of the library, happily away from his strong-willed wife, who lived in Cairo but visited him on Coptic holidays. Habachi's health started to fail in 1982, and after his death in February 1984, Atteya resided at Chicago House. Her domain was a desk in the library where she could see who came and went. But her presence was most apparent at teatime, when she would hold court with visitors.

Life at Chicago House in More Recent Years

Kent Weeks became field director in 1973. He was accompanied by his wife, Susan, an accomplished archaeological illustrator, and their two young children, Christopher and Emily (fig. 12.58; see also fig. 3.25 in chapter 3). Weeks came from a different circle than did the previous directors, all of whom had been from Chicago, and most of whom were ordained ministers. Jill Kamil relates Labib Habachi's recalling, "Kent is a dynamic personality who changed Chicago House from a monastery into an embassy. . . . Everything was different when he was there with his wife, Susan, and their two wonderful children. . . . With the encouragement of his wife, long-established routines were broken. Innovations such as buffet lunches in the sunny courtyard were introduced, as well as a weekly film,*

* Films for the Friday night showings were supplied by Jill Kamil, who worked for 20th Century Fox in Egypt. Initially, there was a small charge to offset the rental, but in later years, when Bell heard that members of the Polish mission were not

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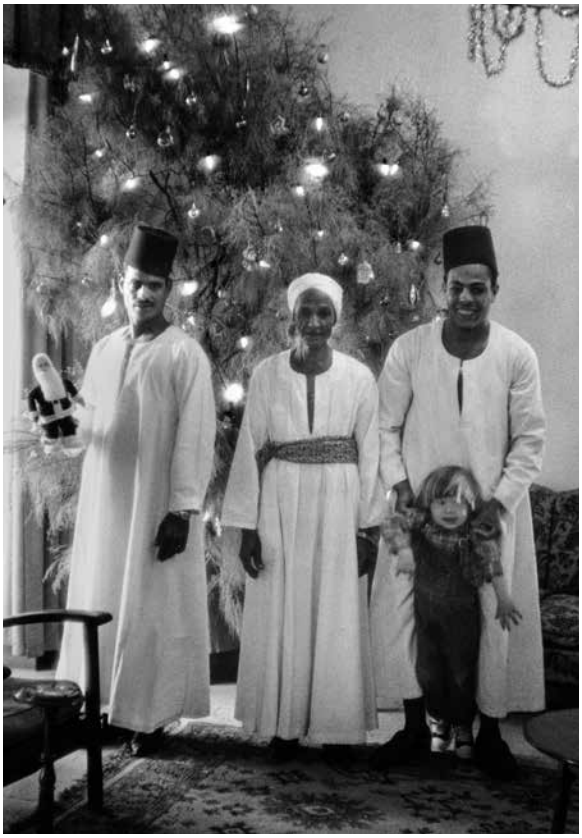

Figure 12.58. Christopher Weeks (lower right) celebrating Christmas at Chicago House, ca. 1974. Left to right: Mahmoud Abd el-Rahman (holding Santa figure), Shafei, Mahmoud Abdellahi. Photo: Epigraphic Survey, Abdellahi album.

felucca rides, and parties on such occasions as New Year's Eve. Visitors, whether scholars, Luxor residents, or friends, were always welcome to have a cup of tea or a meal, or to work in the library."[232]

Among the changes in the daily life of the house, Weeks instituted a single communal dining table instead of several small tables that seated three or four persons, which "had been the arrangement for the previous fifty years,"* and the menu became more varied, with European and Egyptian dishes providing variety amid the "simple midwest American fare." Buffets were served in the courtyard on Fridays, when any members of other expeditions using the library that day were invited to stay for lunch. Holiday parties were held, and beer and wine (only two bottles for the long table) were available at some dinners. Some of the parties were memorable. Weeks recalled a Halloween party to which Jean Lauffray, the director of the French mission at Karnak, arrived on a donkey that he rode into the sitting room accompanied by a chorus of singing, galabia-clad French Egyptologists.[233]

The house was run by the *mudira* and Shafei, the headwaiter and chief of the house staff (figs. 12.57 and 12.58). Susan Weeks enjoyed the job, her husband recalling that "she often remarked that she had never enjoyed any task quite so much. She and the household staff got on extremely well together." The Weekses had an advantage in that they both spoke Arabic. Most of the house staff came from Karnak, while the temple staff were from the west bank. In 1973, Weeks hired new engineer Saleh Shehat Suleiman (see fig. 12.34), who worked at the house until 2003. Like Tim Healey, he could fix or rebuild anything, and his quiet demeanor and the sparkle in his eye were a lovely presence at the house.

The Weeks children enjoyed their years in Luxor. For playmates they had Frank Howard's son, Ulysses, and children of the house staff and workmen. Both children acquired fair Arabic in the process. They played in the garden at the house and at the Winter Palace Hotel. They were initially homeschooled by Susan, but in their last year (1975), Christopher was enrolled in the local private school (formerly the Carrie M. Buchanan United Presbyterian Girls' Boarding School), only to be withdrawn when they found that "the teacher was locking [him] in a closet during recess because the other children were continually pulling his blond hair and pinching his light skin!"[234]

attending because of the fee, he eliminated it (Peck, personal comm.).

* Although many pre-1973 photographs show a long, communal table, most of them record special occasions such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Life at the house during the Lanny and Martha Bell years was a very social time, and Chicago House became the center of Luxor academic and social gatherings. Colleagues from other missions or universities stopped by for tea (or more), Bell invited graduate students to give presentations to their older colleagues, and the library was full of Egyptian and Western scholars and students. Bell was known for his hospitality. He provided short-term lodging if he could, loaned surveying and other technical equipment to other missions, helped arrange car repairs, stored the cash of other missions in his safe and their equipment in Chicago House's magazines, and allowed the house to function as the Luxor *poste restante.*

Thanksgiving and Christmas were always celebrated with style. Carol Meyer recalls a "Franco-American" Thanksgiving with twenty-five guests, including Helen Jacquet-Gordon and Jean Jacquet (who then lived in a charming mudbrick house perched on the north wall of Karnak Temple) and the nine members of engineer Saleh Shehat's family. The courtyard was decorated with flowers and paper turkeys, and Meyer (who was an excellent cook) and house manager Christian Loeben baked American-style cheesecakes.[235] Cook Abdel Zaher led the "benediction" at the ceremonial presentation of the turkey (see fig. 12.57).

Movie nights continued, often attended by the French from Karnak and the Poles from Deir el-Bahari. Carol Meyer recalled being asked what they did for entertainment in sleepy Luxor, and she replied, "We *are* the entertainment—they come to us." Quite a change from the Nims years.[236]

The Christmas tradition involved taking the Land Rovers loaded with staff to Abdel Zaher's family farm and selecting a reasonable tamarisk substitute for an evergreen to decorate with ornaments brought from the United States over the years.[237] In the Dorman years, an artificial tree replaced the tamarisk. After the tree was trimmed, sugar cookies were baked and decorated (in some years, more than 250 of them; fig. 12.59), eggnog drunk, and some carols sung. Ray Johnson sometimes built rough replicas of Luxor Temple from gingerbread. Another important Christmas tradition was the annual bonus (baksheesh) to the house staff that consisted of imported cigarettes and soap, as well as cash donations from the scientific staff.

Christmas Eve dinner might be for fourteen or forty, but usually featured a stuffed turkey (or turkeys), always ceremonially presented by the cooks, who gave a short speech. The meal included gravy, cranberry sauce (usually brought in by a visitor from the States), creamed onions, peas, and sweet potatoes.

The staff reconvened on Christmas Day for brunch with two kinds of scrambled eggs, orange juice (or screwdrivers!), cookies, coffee, and bacon—not the usual expedition fare. Bell was a "farm boy from Iowa"—hog country—and he would occasionally butcher a pig in Healey House, to the horror of the kitchen staff. Richard Jasnow recalled in 1981 helping Bell line the floor and walls with old newspapers in preparation for the deed. The meat was wrapped and stored in the freezer. The kitchen staff found the whole process (and the results) repugnant and would have nothing to do with the pork or with the knives used for the butchering. The Bells cooked on pork nights.

In the late 1980s, Mardi Gras provided another excuse for a party promoted by Carol Meyer, who was from Louisiana. The festivities included mint juleps and, on some occasions, costumes (fig. 12.60). Halloween, too, called for elaborate costumes, balloons, fake cobwebs, and cookies, and it was another good excuse to host colleagues from all over Luxor.

Although Chicago House generated a lot of its own entertainment, there were attractions in Luxor, too. There were staff outings for ice cream at the Jolie-Ville Hotel south of town, and some staff members would unwind at the Etap Hotel's disco. Shopping was also a leisure activity. Carlotta Maher led the jewelry brigade through the better stores in town, and some of the shops in the *suq* (market) were

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Figure 12.59. Decorating Christmas cookies, 1988. Left to right: Ray Johnson, Martha Bell, John Darnell, Lanny Bell, Debbie Darnell, Carol Meyer, Margaret and Emily Dorman. Photo: D. Lanka.

good sources for rugs, silver, and just getting out of the house. Local restaurants were rarely patronized;* bars, or the Jolie-Ville for ice cream, more so.

Pets provided another diversion. For years there was a black dog, the most memorable being Bell's Barguta (Arabic for "flea") and later Di Cerbo's Nikon (like the camera). Problems with the dogs biting and barking led to the more recent "cats only" rule.[238]

Communication with Europe and America was difficult, and into the late 1980s, there was only a local line that was tied into one of the four shared "trunk" lines connecting Cairo to Aswan. To place a call, one had to ring an operator who was in a building behind the Savoy Hotel.[239] International calls were made from a phone booth at the Etap Hotel. One gave the number to the operator, then waited for a phone booth, and then spoke quickly because the calls were very expensive. The calls were not private, and the operators listened in. The lack of easy and affordable communication put a strain on personal relationships.

Until recent years, even the mail was problematic. Well-meaning people who sent packages to Luxor probably did not know that the field director had to go to customs—which might have opened and kept the package for weeks—to fill out forms and pay duty for, say, a box of homemade brownies, by then probably stale. Censors often opened incoming mail. Outgoing letters were sent via the "*insh'allah* express," which relied on visitors to the house carrying stamped mail back home and dropping it in a US mailbox. When Carlotta Maher, who wrote many letters to supporters of Chicago House,

* When I was in Luxor as an ARCE fellow in 1985–86, I sampled many of the local restaurants, partly through necessity. My notes, which awarded restaurants stars (good) and multiple daggers (really awful), were themselves given an award designed by Sue Osgood: "The First Annual Luxor Diner's Guide Award."

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Figure 12.60. Mardi Gras, 1990. Back: Peter Piccione, Myrna Lane, Di Grodzins, Carol Meyer, Richard Jasnow, Tina Di Cerbo, John Darnell, Shafei, Carlotta Maher, Harry and Virginia Dorman, Henri Riad. Front: Peter, Kathy, Margaret, and Emily Dorman, Sue Osgood, Ray Johnson. Photo: S. Lezon.

had especially urgent letters, she would take them to one of the hotels and listen for British or American tourists, then ask if they would be willing to take the mail home with them.[240]

The work schedule under Bell was five and a half days, with half of Saturday and all day Sunday off. An additional three and a half days were granted as a spring break. Many staff members used the time to explore other parts of Egypt.[241]

February 1986 was a time of political unrest in Cairo owing to riots on the part of paramilitary/police conscripts (*merkazi*). Bell and Maher were in Cairo on business and had to abide by a curfew.[242] Fall 1986 saw new government regulation on imports, part of a policy of forcing people to buy local products and not send currency abroad. It was unpopular and widely seen as an excuse for the government to raise prices. After a few days of protests, the import bans against dried milk, lentils, and some mechanical parts were lifted, but with it came rationing, Egyptians being allowed only fifteen kilos of flour and one bar of soap per month from the "official" market. Chicago House quickly ran through its flour, salt, and soap allowances, and Bell traveled to the government offices in Qena to negotiate for more.[243] The price of candy—an important part of the celebration of Moulid al Nabi, the Prophet Muhammad's birthday—was sky high that year because of the sugar shortage.

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The house continued to purchase dry goods (when available) from Maison Thomas in Cairo. According to Chuck Van Siclen, the invoices were perfect for padding the total and skimming the extra cash. As he recalled, blood money owed to a family, one of whose members was struck by the Chicago House chauffeur, was raised that way.[244]

The corniche in front of the house became a battleground between the Survey and tour boats. Although Chicago House paid for rights to moor in front of the house* and maintained the city-owned frontage property all the way south to the Savoy Hotel, the tour boats parked directly in front; ran their generators all night; played loud music; threw trash in the Nile; and attracted flocks of taxis, horse-drawn carriages, and donkeys to the area in front of the gate. In the 1980s, Azzouz Sadek of the Documentation Center, and a good friend of Chicago House, managed to park the Center's small, quiet boat in front, preventing larger boats from docking there. But that small victory did not last, and the battle intensified as mooring spots became scarce, especially in the late 1980s when the number of tour ships increased—particularly when extravaganza productions of *Aïda* were staged at Deir el-Bahari and Luxor Temple, bringing even more tourists to town. Said, the Chicago House gateman, would patrol with his rifle, but his show of force was ineffective at keeping the landing clear.[245] In 1989, the boats were rafted three deep.[246]

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Survey had two Land Rovers (the newest purchased in 1979)[247] and the 1950 Chevy purchased by George Hughes,† but transportation was still a problem. The older Land Rover was needed on the west bank to take the staff from the boat landing to Medinet Habu, and the other was often commandeered by driver Abdel Hayy for errands in town. The Chevy was still in use but driven gently. Engineer Saleh Shehat managed to get parts for it and keep it on the road, where it got admiring looks. By the early 1990s, when Kathy Dorman would drive it, the lack of a functioning horn and turn signals was made up for by her daughters' hand gestures and "beep-beep" shouts.

In 1979, an era came to an end with the death of *reis* Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed Abd el-Rahman (see fig. 12.55; also the photo in the introduction and fig. 3.33 in chapter 3). He was the longest-serving employee of Chicago House, having worked at the Gourna house from 1928, only four years after the Survey was established. Initially, he was an assistant to photographer John Hartman, but he became indispensable to the operation of Chicago House. Ibrahim supervised the workmen and the equipment, dealt with the Department of Antiquities, and oversaw travel and permits. Weeks remembered him as a "true gentleman, modest, knowledgeable, efficient, well liked, and essential to the running of Chicago House and its projects. . . . He lived in Karnak village, and visited his home once weekly, otherwise spending his every waking moment at Chicago House dealing with its operation."‡ The *reis* spent more time at the house than in the field because of his domestic responsibilities.[248]

In 1985, Bell invited Dr. Henri Riad (fig. 12.61), a former director of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, to live at the house. He was a gracious, courtly man with impeccable manners. He was well known in the community and accorded great respect. Carlotta Maher recalled an incident when some of the staff and Dr. Henri (as he was always addressed) drove to Karnak to see an "extravaganza." They drew up to Karnak Temple to park, and soldiers tried to shoo them away because "parking was forbidden by order of the government," to which Dr. Henri

* At this time, the Survey did not operate its own boat, but it still hoped to keep the area in front of the house clear.

† Hughes kept a logbook for the Chevy. It records the car's first road trip from Alexandria to Luxor. The logbook (and the Chevy) is still at Chicago House.

‡ Weeks, personal comm. Chuck Van Siclen also recalled a story that a library custodian who coveted *reis* Ibrahim's position hired assassins to kill him so that he could become *reis*. They finally called a truce.

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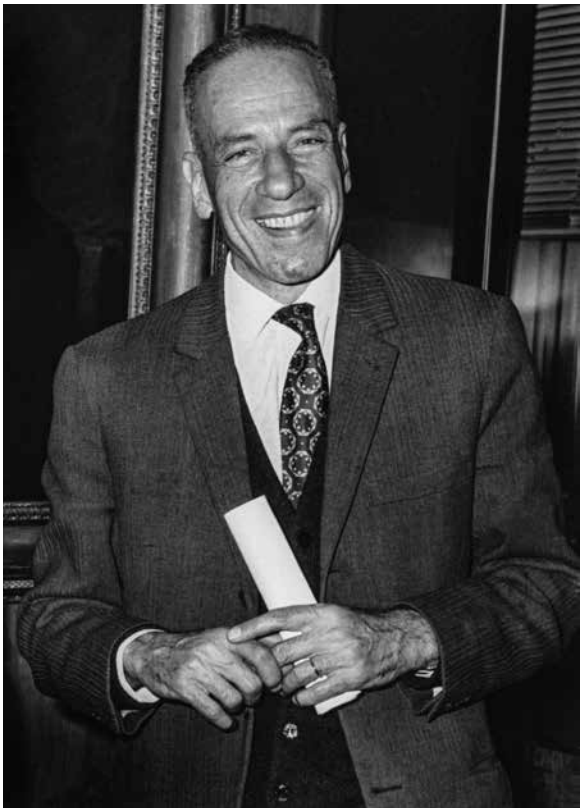

Figure 12.61. Dr. Henri Riad, a former director of the Egyptian Museum, who spent much of his later life at Chicago House, ca. 1980. Photo: Epigraphic Survey.

replied in his booming voice, "We *are* the government," and they parked.[249] Dr. Henri was a deep source of knowledge about Egypt, its culture, and its antiquities. He was generous with his time and enjoyed giving artist Sue Osgood Arabic lessons. He also enjoyed the company of the Dorman girls and made a Snakes and Ladders game to teach Arabic numbers to Margaret. Dr. Henri was obsessed with dominos, and he challenged all takers. Carlotta Maher recalled that he would play night after night—and usually win. Archive assistant Mary Grimshaw, who was at the house for a few months during the 1999–2001 seasons, was a favored opponent. When Dr. Henri died, he left his library and papers to Chicago House.

The Dorman years brought a different feeling to the house because the house again had resident children—the Dormans' two young daughters, Margaret and Emily. The days of discussion about whether children or even spouses were welcome were long past. Kathy Dorman was a teacher, and she brought lesson plans from Chicago and turned the third-floor tower room into a school space.* Margaret studied French with a local woman, and Emily was tutored in German by Tina Di Cerbo. Epigrapher John Darnell took special delight in the girls, and they would tear around the compound reenacting historical battles from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan as portrayed in popular films. The kids also enjoyed the petting zoo at the Jolie-Ville Hotel and enacting plays dressed in elaborate homemade costumes.

In the tradition of hospitality to senior scholars extended to Labib Habachi and Henri Riad, in 1998, Jean Jacquet and Helen Jacquet-Gordon (fig. 12.62) moved from their home at Karnak to Chicago House as "resident Egyptologists." In the 1999 season, Helen worked to finalize the manuscript of her book on the graffiti at the Khonsu Temple (see "Publication of the Khonsu Temple" in chapter 5), and they both helped in the library and in the field, especially with architectural questions. They were to be invaluable in sorting out the archives of Labib Habachi and Edwin (Ted) Brock, and they donated their own photo collection of 1,650 negatives, which were scanned and uploaded into a specially designed database.[250] To Carlotta's relief, they also took over as domino partners with Dr. Henri. They enjoyed spending the afternoons sitting in the courtyard, chatting with whoever passed by.

The social events, Halloween parties, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Mardi Gras, as well as whatever other occasions could be celebrated,

* It seems likely that this function was the room's original one. Early "schemes" for the design of the house had a "sewing and children's room" on the second floor, but it disappeared from the final plans, presumably being moved to an out-of-sight area.

Figure 12.62. Jean Jacquet and Helen Jacquet-Gordon, who spent most of their careers working at Karnak and their later years at Chicago House, 2008. Photo: S. Lezon.

continued in the Dorman years. Special events included a 1988 *heb-sed** for Ray Johnson marking his first decade with the Survey—amusing, in retrospect, because Johnson was to stay in Luxor for another thirty-four years, and because, at the time, Carol Meyer commented, "10 years at Chicago house, and how many people make it that long?"[251] The attitude toward staying in Luxor had perhaps changed, because a number of the staff who started in the 1980s and 1990s stayed far longer than ten years (Sue Lezon, Sue Osgood, Margaret De Jong, Yarko Kobylecky, Carol Meyer, John Darnell, Debbie Darnell, Jay Heidel, Tina Di Cerbo, Lotfi Hassan, Hiroko Kariya, Nashaat Seidhom Awad, and Sami Komos Tawdros)—and many of those people are still with the Survey. Some of the relative "newcomers" now at the house have similar longevity (Brett McClain, Jen Kimpton, Anait Helmholz, Frank Helmholz, Keli Alberts, Essam el-Sayed, Alain Arnaudiès, Emmanuelle Arnaudiès, and Samwell Maher).

Kathy Dorman was an accomplished baker, but the old and temperamental oven, described as "an iron box with two kerosene lamps underneath," could be a challenge even to her.[252] In one memorable bread-baking event, the wicks on the oven were turned too high, filling the kitchen with a layer of dark soot. Even Dr. Henri pitched in to clean the tiled walls. After that incident, Kathy made the dough and formed the loaves but let the kitchen crew (fig. 12.63) do the actual baking. She philosophically commented that "as long as patience and humor remain intact, running the kitchen at Chicago House is pretty entertaining."[253] Other members of the staff (Carol Meyer, Tina Di Cerbo, and Sue Osgood) also would take over the kitchen to turn out cookies, brownies, and other favorites.

A special birthday dinner commemorating the Survey's ninetieth anniversary was held in November 2014. As part of the celebrations, Jen Kimpton made masks of some of the earliest residents, including Breasted, Bollacher, Canziani, Wilson, Byles, and Hölscher (fig. 12.64).

Although holidays were celebrated with food and drink, even in the late 1980s it could be difficult to obtain certain foods. Peter Dorman recalls that at the beginning of each season, Saleh would drive him to a law office to present papers that would allow Chicago House to receive its allotment of sugar, oil, and rice, which were available at discounted prices under the government subsidy program.

Fundraising continued to be a major draw on the field director's time. Although the 1995 US government endowment relieved the pressure—and grants from USAID, the World Monuments Fund, the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, and other agencies paid for specific projects—operating expenses were always a concern. Carlotta Maher and Bell, Dorman, and Johnson worked to encourage corporate and private gifts. Friends of Chicago House (FOCH), started by Bell with the help of Ron and Ann Wolfe in 1986, continued to be an important way to cultivate the business world in Cairo. That same year, Bell and Maher organized "FOCH tours"

* In ancient Egypt, a celebration of the king's accession, initially held on the thirtieth anniversary.

Figure 12.63. Kitchen staff, Thanksgiving 2023. Left to right: Zakaria Mohammed Amin, Nasser Rabie Hassan (Ramadan), Eid el-Shafei Ibrahim (Gamal), Abd el-Wahab Adly Ahmed, Mohammed Saieed Mohammed Salman (Adel), Mohammed Siddiq Rashidy, El-Tayib Abd el-Aziz Mohammed. Photo: S. Lezon.

aimed at that audience. These three-day tours were very popular: the 1986 tour had eighty people, and the one in 1990 had fifty. They entailed tours of Luxor, with special focus on the work of the Survey, and trips to nearby but little-visited sites such as Gebel el-Silsila. Organizing the tours was time consuming, and because they called on the participation of every member of the staff, some grumbled that they were a distraction from the scientific work and that the director was too busy with the tour arrangements to approve drawings. The tours were big affairs, and they made valuable connections in the Cairo business world and brought in cash and welcome gifts. For example, the 1989 tour included a $1,000 per-person donation, and after the tour, the group pitched in additional funds for conserving the Survey's collection of glass-plate negatives, a Christmas party, and thirty bottles of French wine (a rare and expensive commodity in Luxor), the bottom line being about $50,000 in revenue.[254] During the Dorman years and later, the tours included a black-tie evening—a rare event in Egypt, and one that the Cairo community enjoyed (fig. 12.65), with dancing under the stars in the courtyard to tangos and foxtrots from Chicago House's collection of vintage record albums. On the 1989 trip, the seventy guests on donkeys included US ambassador Robert Pelletreau, preceded by his security detail in a truck with a flashing light on top and his

Figure 12.64. Dinner celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of the Epigraphic Survey, with staff holding masks of early Survey members, 2014. Left, front to back: Basmala and Abdel Rahman el-Sayed, Essam el-Sayed (finance manager), Salsabeel el-Sayed, Nidaa el-Oraby, Anait and Frank Helmholz, Tina Di Cerbo, Marie Bryan. Right, front to back: Margaret De Jong, Nahed Samir, Lotfi Hassan, Brett McClain, Jen Kimpton, Keli Alberts, Jay Heidel, Ray Johnson, Johannes Weninger. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

Egyptian bodyguard with walkie-talkie and side-arm on another donkey.[255]

In 1990, Dorman introduced the *Chicago House Bulletin*. Initially published three times per year, it featured articles about the fieldwork, stories about life in Luxor and at Chicago House, and essays written by staff members about their own research. It was mailed to donors and to visitors to Chicago House who signed the guest book. In 2011, under Johnson, it evolved into a full-color glossy magazine. It proved successful in raising awareness and funds.

The Gulf War of 1990–91 had an only minor impact on the work of the Survey—mainly that two photographers who had planned to arrive in January, just when the hostilities began, had to

Figure 12.65. FOCH tour participants and Survey staff in the Chicago House courtyard, November 1995. Photo: Y. Kobylecky.

cancel their trips, delaying the completion of the photography of the Small Temple at Medinet Habu. The biggest problem was communication with families back home, who were understandably concerned about security in Egypt. Luxor continued to be a "bubble," and the staff, who were after all in the Middle East, got world news later than people at home, producing an uncomfortable feeling of being out of touch. Predictably, tourism plummeted. The ensuing cancellation of the FOCH tour meant a corresponding loss of revenue, and the local and national economy suffered, but work in the temple was blissfully quiet without the hordes of tourists. By early 1991, the staff members of Chicago House were among the few foreigners in town. Luxor was quiet, but security was still ramped up. The brass plaques announcing the identity of Chicago House were once again removed from the entrance, and the government posted a twenty-four-hour guard at the gate. The guards provided some entertainment because they would play dominos with the Survey security staff. That winter was very cold, and to keep warm, the government men lit fires outside the gate at the base of one of the ficus trees, which soon died and toppled over the corniche (luckily not onto the wall). Subsequently, they used the wooden chair provided by Chicago House as fuel to keep warm. They were given another one—this time of plastic.[256]

The US Embassy and its staff were supportive of the Survey's work, hosting receptions in its honor at the residence in Cairo and making introductions to potential supporters. They also ensured that American diplomats and administrators knew about this important and longest-standing American research mission in Egypt. Among the distinguished guests to Chicago House were a group of senators led by Patrick Leahy (in 1991),

Madeleine Albright and a large entourage (in 1993), Al and Tipper Gore (in 1994), George H. W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft (in 1996), Hillary and Chelsea Clinton (in 1999; fig. 12.66), and US ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft (in 2016). These guests raised Chicago House's visibility and helped maintain good relations with USAID and other funding agencies, which prominently featured the work of the Survey in their own reports. The house had other distinguished guests, including David Cornwell (a.k.a. John le Carré) who, in his thriller *The Night Manager*, included "Larry" as the director of "the Chicago House."

The Marjorie M. Fisher Library at Chicago House is an invaluable asset. It is the largest and most complete Egyptological library in Upper Egypt and one of the best in all the Middle East. Originally intended to serve the members of the expedition, it has gradually opened to other expeditions, officials of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, and more recently to a broader range of Egyptian colleagues, students, and local inspectors. The librarian is usually a full-time appointment, but in some years the library has been managed by staff epigraphers, including John Wilson, Charley Nims, Ed Wente, Deborah Darnell, Richard Jasnow, Andrew Baumann, Steve Shubert, and Jen Kimpton. In some cases, the wife of a staff member (Elizabeth Piccione in 1979; Martha Bell in 1981–88; Karin Bohleke in 1999–2000) or a resident Egyptologist (May Trad in 1978–80) took care of it. But over the years, there have been professional librarians, including Phoebe Byles (in 1926–35), Andrée Bichara (in 1973–75), Marie Bryan (in 2004–13), and presently Anait Helmholz, who started as an assistant in 2006 and is now assisted by Martina Roshdy Maher. From 2013 to 2015, Gina Salama assisted in the library before she moved on to work on the Luxor block fragments project. Keeping inventory of the books, budgeting and deciding what to order, and cataloging new acquisitions take time, as do helping library patrons and reshelving books. Starting in 1993, the catalog has been digitized, and in 2014 Marie Bryan, assisted by Andrea

Figure 12.66. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chelsea Clinton (at right) in the library, March 1999, with (left to right) Carlotta Maher, Ray Johnson, Gaballa Ali Gaballa (general secretary of the Supreme Council of Antiquities), and Yarko Kobylecky. Photo: S. Lezon.

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Dudek, converted the collection from the Dewey Decimal to the Library of Congress system.[257]

Today, Chicago House continues to be a landmark in Luxor and an outpost of scholarship. As James Henry Breasted intended, its undeniable comfort facilitates the work of the staff who spend half the year—rather than weeks or a month—in the field. Chicago House still acts as the main node of scholarship in Luxor, a place where colleagues can consult the library and exchange news about who is in town. The house is full of memories that document not only archaeology and Egyptology in Luxor but also a century of the Epigraphic Survey itself.

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Appendixes

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Appendix A: Mission Statement of the Epigraphic Survey

The field mission of the Epigraphic Survey of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago is the facsimile documentation of reliefs and hieroglyphic inscriptions on ancient Egyptian monuments through photography and precise recording techniques, as well as the accomplishment of appropriate conservation, in an effort to assist in preserving the cultural heritage of pharaonic civilization. The purpose of the Epigraphic Survey is the publication of the architectural, textual, and iconographic documentation derived from this fieldwork in a definitive manner, to stand as a permanent record of the present condition of the monuments, and to be used as the basis for further scholarly research and conservation. The use of the library and archival facilities of the permanent headquarters of the Survey at Chicago House in Luxor may be offered to colleagues and visitors, at the discretion of the field director, to assist other missions in their field research, conservation, and logistics, and to promote the dissemination of information within the scholarly and general communities.

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Appendix B: The Chicago House Method of Making Facsimile Copies

> The ideal recording system . . . must unite in one record three things: the speed and accuracy of the camera, the reading ability of the experienced orientalist, and the drawing skill of the accurate draftsman.
>
> —James Henry Breasted, *Medinet Habu* I, xi

"Collation" refers to the checking of drawings against the original source. Chicago's insistence on multiple collations is what differentiates its system from others and ensures the accuracy of the final facsimile.

The Chicago House Method consists of the following steps:

1. A distortion-free photograph (either 8″ × 10″ or 5″ × 7″ format) is taken of the relief, then printed and enlarged to 16″ × 20″ or 20″ × 24″ on a sheet of fiber-based, double-weight, matte-surface photographic paper with a special photo emulsion that will accept both pencil and ink lines. At least two copies of the enlargement are made, with different contrast levels.
2. The artist takes the photo print to the wall and pencils all visible details onto the surface of the photo.
3. The pencil lines are inked by the artist in their studio, employing weighted lines to indicate whether the relief is raised or sunk.
4. The photo is bleached in an iodine bath, leaving the inked drawing.
5. The artist cleans the resulting line drawing and may retouch its lines.
6. The drawing is copied by blueprinting. Two copies are made; one is kept for reference.
7. A 1:1 scale photocopy of the drawing is made for reference purposes.
8. The other copy of the blueprint is cut into small segments. Each is pasted onto a piece of heavy paper measuring roughly 9″ × 13″, producing "collation sheets" with margins in which comments can be written.
9. The first epigrapher compares the drawing on each collation sheet with the wall and makes corrections on the sheet in black pencil, adding explanations as necessary in the margins, with a line connecting each comment to the edit on the drawing. As part of the close examination of the wall and drawing, the epigrapher compiles epigraphic notes and begins translating any texts.
10. The second epigrapher takes the collation sheet to the wall and evaluates the first epigrapher's edits. They place a check mark in blue pencil in front of each edit with which they agree, and a blue O next to each edit that needs more discussion. The second epigrapher may make additional corrections and comments to the sheet (fig. B.1).
11. The first epigrapher reviews each of the edits marked with a blue O. If they accept the second epigrapher's response, they check it in blue pencil and underline the comment.
12. The two epigraphers meet at the wall and reach consensus on any correction they disagree about.
13. The collation sheets are passed back to the artist, who compares the edits with what they see on the wall. Each edit that the artist agrees with is marked with a green check mark, and any needing further discussion with a green O. The artist may add other comments to the collation sheet in green pencil.

14. The first epigrapher checks the edits on the collation sheet against the revised drawing. They mark all edits entered correctly on the drawing with a yellow-pencil check mark, and any outstanding edits with a yellow O.
15. The artist addresses any outstanding edits, and the first epigrapher again checks them. If all is satisfactory, the first epigrapher initials and dates the drawing.
16. The field director and the artist do a final check of the drawing at the wall.
17. The final drawing is photographed, and multiple prints are made for safekeeping.
18. The drawing is prepared for publication.

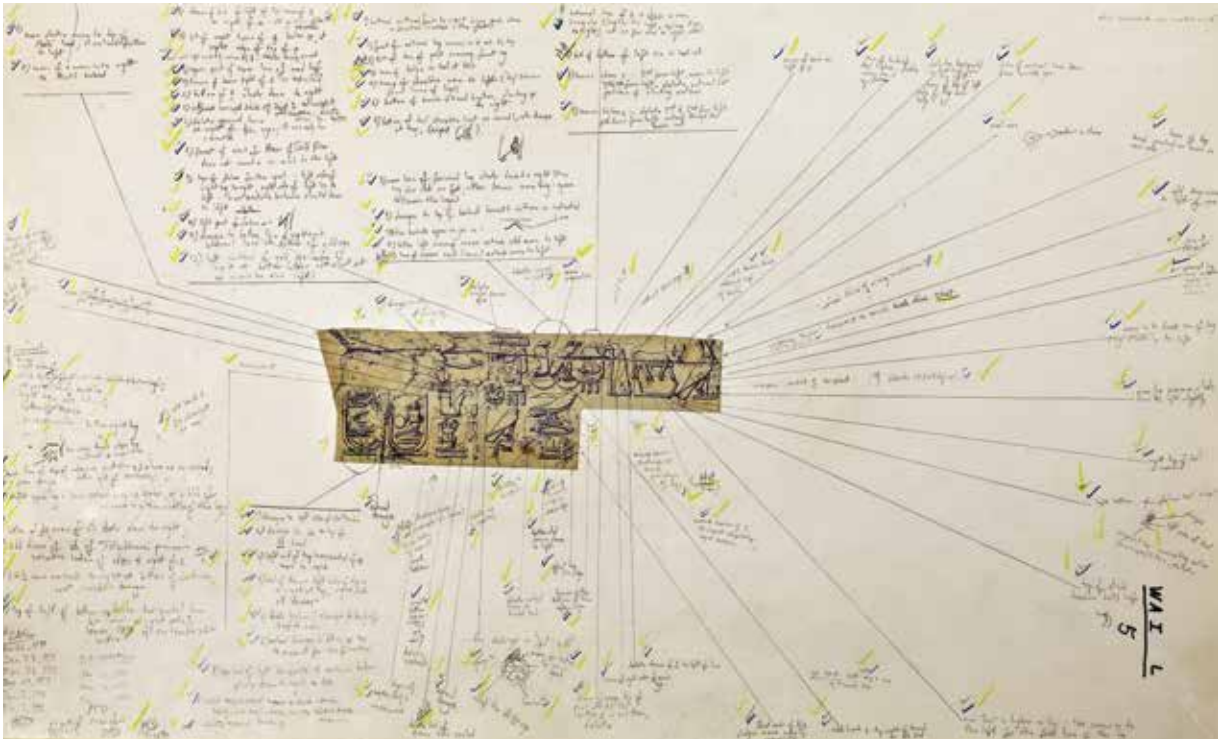

Figure B.1. Collation sheet from the Colonnade Hall at Luxor Temple. The extensive comments are mainly from the first epigrapher's collation, with others added by the second epigrapher. Green check marks are from the artist. Yellow check marks track edits transferred to the final drawing.

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Appendix C: Selected Staff of the Epigraphic Survey

Note: Dates are given by the start of the season, which runs from October to April. Hence "1950" means October 1950 through April 1951, and "1950–1951" means two consecutive seasons, October 1950 through April 1952.

Field Directors (by Date)

Harold Nelson	1924–1946
Richard Parker	1947–1948
George Hughes	1948*–1957
John Wilson (acting director)	1958
George Hughes	1959–1963
Charles Nims	1963†–1971
Edward F. Wente	1971‡–1972
Kent Weeks	1973–1975
Charles C. Van Siclen III (acting director)	1976
Lanny Bell	1977–1988
Peter Dorman	1989–1996
Richard Jasnow (acting director)	1993§
W. Raymond Johnson	1996¶–2021
J. Brett McClain	2022–

Egyptologists/Epigraphers (Alphabetical Order)

Allen, Francis O.	1936
Allen, James	1973–1975
Anthes, Rudolf	1931–1933
Baumann, Andrew	1993–1996**
Binder, Susanne	2009–††
Bohleke, Briant	1999–2000
Callender, John B.	1966
Caminos, Ricardo A.	1947–1950
Castle, Edward W.	1995, 1997–2000
Ciccarello, Mark	1973, 1977–1978
Corcoran, Lorelei H.	1986
Darnell, Deborah	1990–1999
Darnell, John C.	1988–1997
Davies, Vanessa	2005
DeVries, Carl E.	1965–1970
Di Cerbo, Christina	2006–‡‡
Dorman, Peter F.	1984§§
Edgerton, William F.	1926–1928
Emery, Virginia	2006–2010
Fishman, Bernard	1979–1981
Gaudard, François	2005
Greco, Christian	2007–2011¶¶
Hallmann, Aleksandra	2016, 2019–2023
Hays, Harold	2000–2004
Hughes, George R.	1946–1948***
Jasnow, Richard	1981, 1989–1994
Kimpton, Jen L.	2002–
Larkin, David B.	1966, 1968–1971
Lesko, Leonard H.	1963–1964
McClain, J. Brett	1998–2021†††
McCorquodale, Kim	2022‡‡‡
Murnane, William J.	1972–1985

* From 1 January 1949.

† From 1 January 1964.

‡ From 1 January 1972.

§ November 1993 and February 1994.

¶ From 1 March 1997.

** Also artist, 1994–1995.

†† Archaeologist, TT 107.

‡‡ Also artist, 1989–2005.

§§ Field director, 1989–1996.

¶¶ Also artist, 2006.

*** Field director, 1948–1957, 1959–1963.

††† Field director, 2022–.

‡‡‡ Archaeologist, TT 107.

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Nims, Charles F.	1935–1938, 1946–1962*
Ockinga, Boyo	2009–†
Papazian, Hratch	1998–1999
Parker, Richard A.	1938–1939, 1946‡
Parker, Stephen	1987
Piccione, Peter	1979
Ransom Williams, Caroline	1926
Roth, Ann Macy	1977–1978
Schmied, Julia	2007–2016
Schott, Siegfried	1931–1936
Seele, Keith C.	1929–1935
Shonkwiler, Randy L.	2001–2003
Shubert, Steven	1982–1984, 2001
Singer, Ariel	2017–2022
Smith, Mark	1976
Thissen, Heinz-Josef	1986
Van Siclen III, Charles C.	1971–1972§
Vinson, Stephen	1995
Walker, Edward J.	1986
Wang, Rebecca	2022
Wente, Edward F.	1959–1962, 1965–1967¶
Wilson, John A.	1926–1931**
Winnerman, Jonathan	2016–2017
Witt, Catherine	2022–2023
Yurco, Frank	1974–1976

Artists (Alphabetical Order)

Abraczinskas, Carol	1998–1999
Alberts, Keli	2008–
Anderson, Robert L.	1949
Arnold, Barbara	1985–1988
Baker, Kathleen	1987
Barnwell, Michael	1961–1965
Boberg, Richard S.	1957
Bollacher, Alfred	1924–1935
Canziani, Virgilio	1926–1938
Champion, Douglas A.	1946–1957
Chubb, John Anthony	1927–1935
Cohn, Linda	1994–1996
Coleman, Reginald H.	1957–1977
De Jong, Margaret	1992–
Der Manuelian, Peter	1984–1986
Di Cerbo, Christina	1989–2005††
Floroff, Alexander	1946, 1950–1964, 1968
Foster, John F.	1959–1961
Garfi, Barbara	1982–1984
Garfi, Salvatore	1982–1984
Greco, Christian	2006‡‡
Greener, Leslie	1932–1935, 1937, 1958–1966
Groves, Vivienne	1988–1989
Hacker, John	1964
Hasselriis, Mark	1946
Heidel, James B.	1990–1993§§
Hoffman, Paul	1982
Howard, Frank	1975–1978
Huxtable, Grace	1966–1972
Jaeschke, Helena	1983–1984
Johnson, W. Raymond	1977, 1979–1995¶¶
Lack, Martyn	1968–1975
Longley, Laurance J.	1928–1931, 1934–1937
Martindale, Robert C.	1934–1935, 1937
Meyer, Carol	1985–1991
Mileham, Geoffrey	1931–1932
Morby, Eric J.	1965
Navarro, Dominique	2016–2022
Osgood, Susan	1985–1986, 1989–
Rasche, Thad	1978–1981
Romer, John	1966–1968, 1973–1976
Sampson, Clare	1973–1974

* Field director, 1963–1971.

† Archaeologist, TT 107.

‡ Field director, 1947–1948.

§ Field director, 1976.

¶ Field director, 1971–1972.

** Acting field director, 1958.

†† Epigrapher, 2006–.

‡‡ Epigrapher, 2007–2011.

§§ Architect, 2009–2021.

¶¶ Field director, 1996–2021.

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Schenck, William	2000–2002
Shepherd, Stanley R.	1938–1939, 1946–1948*
Turner, Anna	1979
Turner, Richard	1968–1972, 1976–1979
Vértes, Krisztián	2005–2022
Wilber, Donald N.	1931–1933
Williams, Bernice	1998–2000

Photographers (Alphabetical Order)

Caban, Mariusz	2022
Cedarwall, Robert	1985
DeVries, Carl E.	1969
Hartman, John	1924–1926
Keefe, Cecile	1991–1992
Kobylecky, Jaroslav	1993–
Krause, Eric	1977
Krause, Karen	1979–1980
Langenstein, Michael	1978
Lanka, Daniel	1988–1991
Leichter, Henry	1929–1940
Lezon, Susan	1982–1985, 1987–1989, 1991–1994, 1997–
Lind, Olaf E.	1927–1928
McDonald, Hilary	2015–2021
Morrison, Arthur Q.	1928–1930
Murray, Owen	2015–2022
Nims, Charles F.	1946–1972†
Olson, Diana	1981
Ross, John	1973–1976
Tetreault, Amanda	2018–
Turner, Richard	1970–1972
Van Eynde, Tom	1986–1989, 1991–1992

* Artist for the Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition, 1933–1935.

† Field director, 1963–1971.

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Appendix D: Publications of the Epigraphic Survey, the Architectural Survey, and the Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition; the Nubian Expedition Epigraphic Volumes; and Projects Not in a Series

Publications of the Epigraphic Survey

Medinet Habu

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume I*: *Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (OIP 8). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume II: Later Historical Records of Ramses III* (OIP 9). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume III: The Calendar, the "Slaughterhouse," and Minor Records of Ramses III* (OIP 23). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume IV: Festival Scenes of Ramses III* (OIP 51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume V: The Temple Proper, Part I: The Portico, the Treasury, and Chapels Adjoining the First Hypostyle Hall, with Marginal Material from the Forecourts* (OIP 83). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume VI: The Temple Proper, Part II: The Re Chapel, the Royal Mortuary Complex, and Adjacent Rooms with Miscellaneous Material from the Pylons, the Forecourts, and the First Hypostyle Hall* (OIP 84). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume VII: The Temple Proper, Part III: The Third Hypostyle Hall and All Rooms Accessible from It with Friezes of Scenes from the Roof Terraces and Exterior Walls of the Temple* (OIP 93). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume VIII: The Eastern High Gate* (OIP 94). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume IX: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part I: The Inner Sanctuaries* (OIP 136): Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2009.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Medinet Habu—Volume X: The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part II: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmosid Peripteros* (ISACP 1). Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago, 2024.

Luxor Temple

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple—Volume 1: The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall* (OIP 112). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple—Volume 2: The Façade, Portals, Upper Register Scenes, Columns, Marginalia, and Statuary in the Colonnade Hall* (OIP 116). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1998.

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Khonsu Temple

The Epigraphic Survey. *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 1: Scenes of King Heribor in the Court* (OIP 100). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1979.

The Epigraphic Survey. *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 2: Scenes and Inscriptions in the Court and the First Hypostyle Hall* (OIP 103). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1981.

Jacquet-Gordon, Helen. *The Temple of Khonsu—Volume 3: The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak: A Manifestation of Personal Piety* (OIP 123). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2003.

Karnak

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume I: Ramses III's Temple within the Great Inclosure of Amon, Part I* (OIP 25). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume II: Ramses III's Temple in the Great Inclosure of Amon, Part II, and Ramses III's Temple in the Precinct of Mut* (OIP 35). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume III: The Bubastite Portal* (OIP 74). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.

The Epigraphic Survey. *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak—Volume IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (OIP 107). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1986.

Publications of the Architectural Survey

Uvo Hölscher. *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume I: General Plans and Views* (OIP 21). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Uvo Hölscher and Rudolf Anthes. *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume II: The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty* (OIP 41). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

Uvo Hölscher. *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume III: The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part I* (OIP 54). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.

Uvo Hölscher. *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume IV: The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part II* (OIP 55). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Uvo Hölscher. *The Excavation of Medinet Habu—Volume V: Post-Ramessid Remains* (OIP 66). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.

Oriental Institute Communications

Harold H. Nelson and Uvo Hoelscher. *Medinet Habu, 1924–28: I. The Epigraphic Survey of the Great Temple of Medinet Habu (Seasons 1924–25 to 1927–28). II. The Architectural Survey of the Great Temple and Palace of Medinet Habu (Season 1927–28)* (OIC 5). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.

Uvo Hölscher and John A. Wilson. *Medinet Habu Studies, 1928/29: I. The Architectural Survey. II. The Language of the Historical Texts Commemorating Ramses III* (OIC 7). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.

Harold H. Nelson and Uvo Hölscher. *Medinet Habu Reports: I. The Epigraphic Survey, 1928–31. II. The Architectural Survey 1929/30* (OIC 10). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931.

Uvo Hölscher. *Excavations at Ancient Thebes, 1930/31* (OIC 15). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932.

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Harold H. Nelson, Uvo Hölscher, and Siegfried Schott. *Work in Western Thebes, 1931–33* (OIC 18). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

The Epigraphic Survey. *The Registry of the Photographic Archive of the Epigraphic Survey* (OIC 27). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1995.

The Sakkarah (Memphis) Expedition

The Sakkarah Expedition. *The Mastaba of Mereruka, Part I: Chambers A 1–10* (OIP 31). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

The Sakkarah Expedition. *The Mastaba of Mereruka, Part II: Chambers A 11–13, Doorjambs and Inscriptions of Chambers A 1–21, Tomb Chamber, and Exterior* (OIP 39). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

The Nubian Expedition Epigraphic Volumes

Herbert Ricke, George R. Hughes, and Edward F. Wente. *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition—Volume 1: The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II* (OINE 1). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Other Publications Not in a Series

Harold Hayden Nelson. *Key Plans Showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations* (OIP 56). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.

The Epigraphic Survey in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities of Egypt. *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192* (OIP 102). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980.

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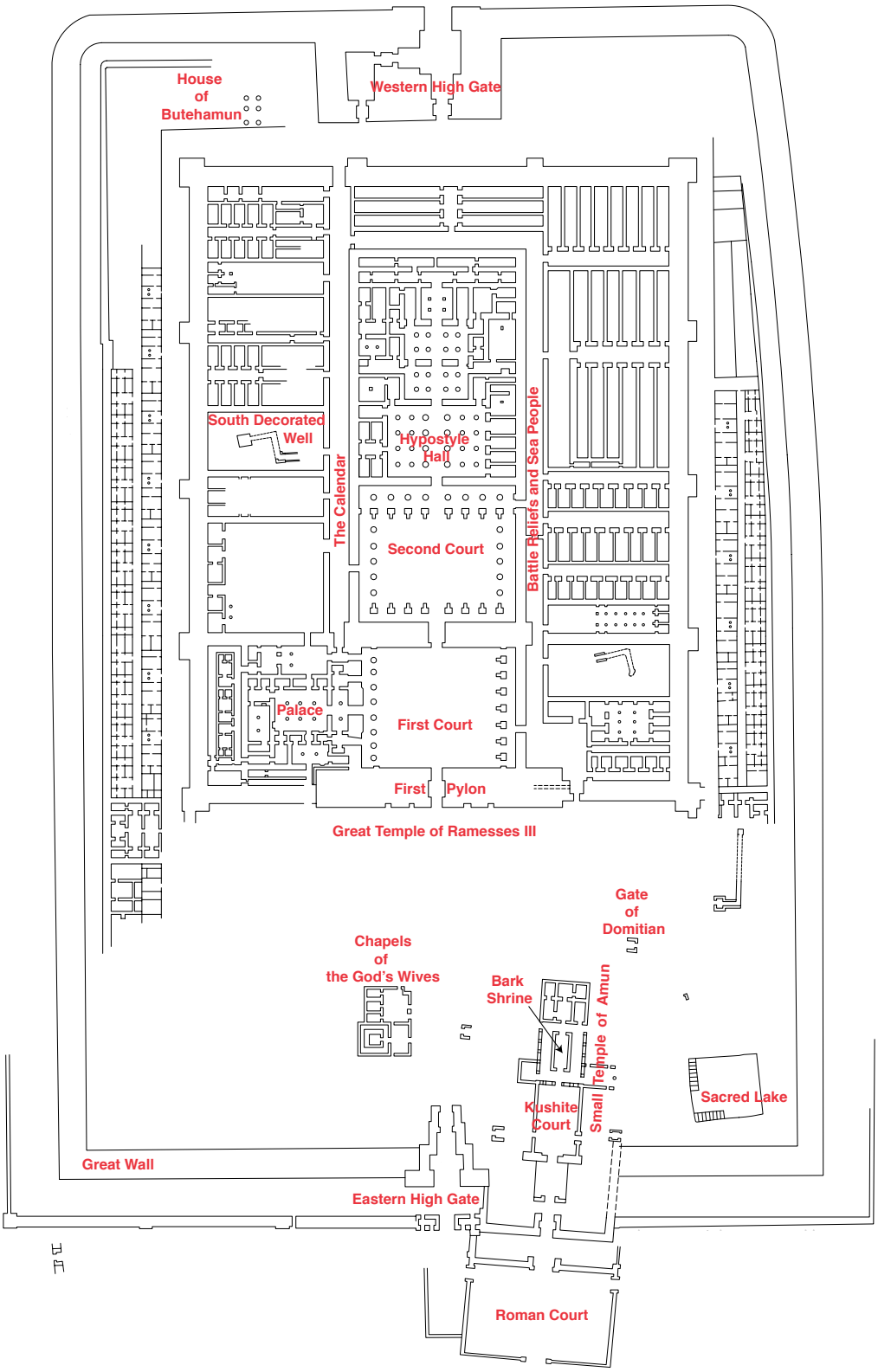
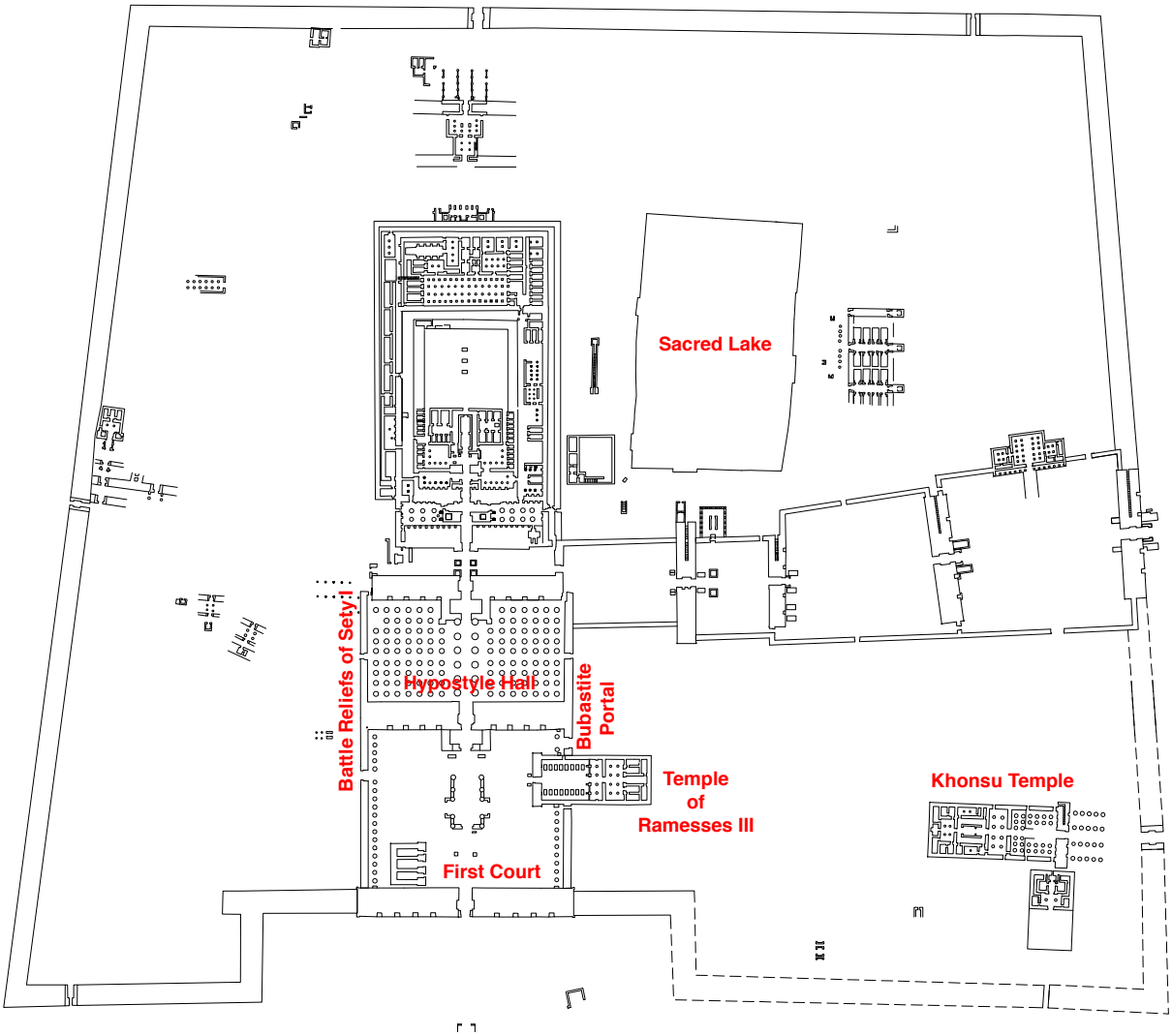
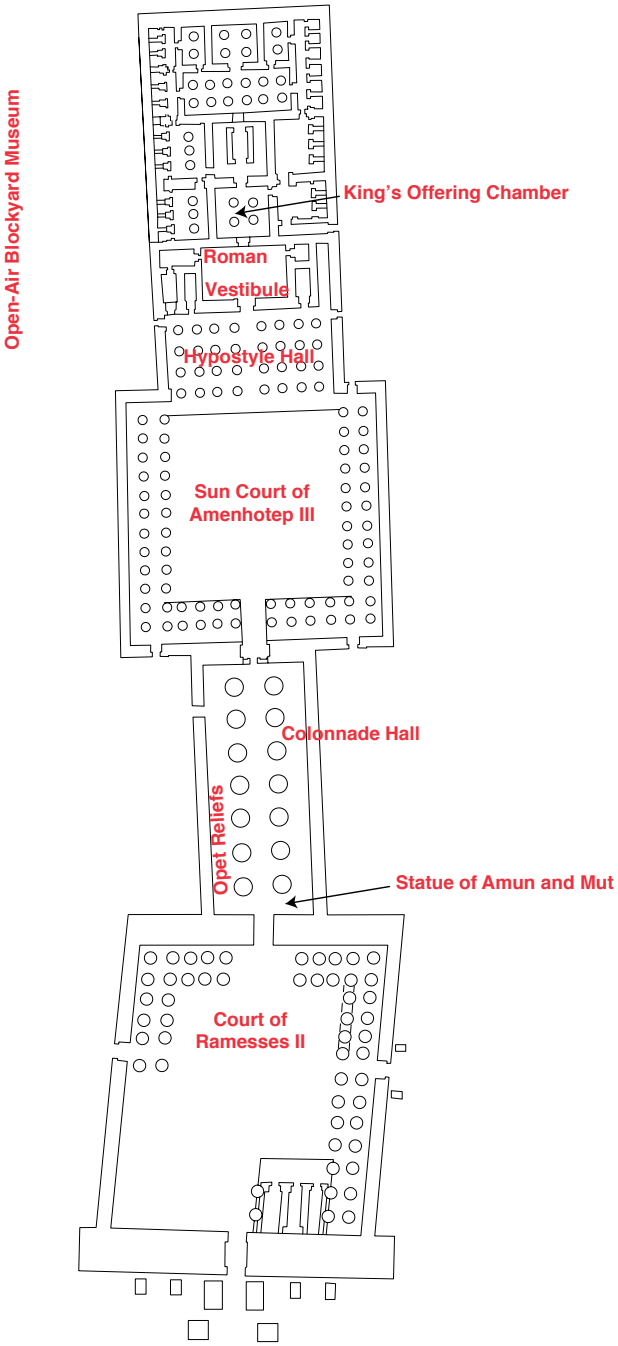


Plan 1. Medinet Habu. Adapted from Nelson, *Key Plans*, pl. 24.



Plan 2. Karnak Temple. Adapted from Nelson, *Key Plans*, pl. 1.



Plan 3. Luxor Temple. Adapted from Nelson, *Key Plans*, pl. 21.

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Endnotes

Documentation of Sources

The original correspondence documenting the activities of the Epigraphic Survey, the Architectural Survey, and their allied projects is housed primarily in the Directors Correspondence files of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC, formerly the Oriental Institute) Museum Archives in Chicago and in the archive of Chicago House in Luxor, Egypt. The documents consist primarily of letters between Luxor and Chicago. Photographs are housed in both locations. Receipts and financial ledgers are kept in Luxor.

Additional documentation is found in university archives in Bremen and Berlin. Other documents pertaining to the Epigraphic Survey are held in the private collections of Dr. Anthony Marks, David Woolman, the Peggy Joy Library, and the family of former field director Harold Nelson. Many unpublished letters and photos of Laurence and Janet Woolman were kindly donated to ISAC in June 2016 by their son David Woolman. Unpublished personal letters of staff members have come from Carol Meyer (from Luxor, October 15, 1985–August 24, 1998) and Peter and Kathy Dorman (from Luxor, 1989–93).

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Abbreviations may be found in the list at the front of the book.

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Chapter 4. Uvo Hölscher and the Architectural Survey, 1926-1936 (pp. 99-141)

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19. Breasted to Lacau, 9 February 1927, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 545.
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22. OIC 15, 1.
23. *Tb.* 1, 30.
24. *Tb.* 1, 17.
25. *Tb.* 1, 14.
26. *Tb.* 1, 23.
27. Nelson to Breasted, 25 October 1927, ISAC Museum Archives.
28. *Tb.* 1, 5.
29. OIC 5, 38.
30. *Tb.* 1, 9.
31. *Tb.* 1, 3.
32. Hölscher to Breasted, 25 July 1927, ISAC Museum Archives.
33. On DeLoach and the Megiddo Expedition, see E. H. Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon: The Search for the Lost City of Solomon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), esp. 303.
34. *Excavation* I, 2.
35. Hölscher to Breasted, 31 December 1930, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 929; *Tb.* 2, 63–64.
36. *Tb.* 2, 96.
37. *Tb.* 2, 63.
38. OIC 7, 23.
39. OIC 7, 23.
40. *Tb.* 2, 64.
41. *Tb.* 2, 63.
42. *Tb.* 2, 85.

43. Breasted to Hölscher, 1 April 1928, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1616.
44. Breasted to Hölscher, 1 April 1928, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1616.
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46. OIC 10, 56.
47. OIC 10, 49.
48. OIC 10, 49.
49. *Excavation* I, 2.
50. Cline, *Digging Up Armageddon*, 73.
51. OIC 15, 20, 21, fig. 14.
52. OIC 15, 1.
53. OIC 15, 1.
54. *Tb.* 3, 29.
55. OIC 15, 54, 58, 63, fig. 36.
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59. Nelson to C. Breasted, 31 December 1930, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 929.
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65. Nelson to Breasted, 8 February 1931, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 205.
66. OIC 18, 91.
67. OIC 15, 1.
68. *Tb.* 3, 27.
69. Hölscher to Breasted, 24 March 1932, ISAC Museum Archives.
70. OIC 18, 91.
71. OIC 18, 91.
72. *Excavation* IV, 22–25.
73. OIC 15, 50.
74. *Excavation* II, 102–8.
75. *Tb.* 3, 40.
76. Nelson to Breasted, 27 March 1931, CHP 218.
77. *Excavation* II, 102; OIC 15, 51.
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79. Breasted to Nelson, 1 February 1932, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1278.
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81. Hölscher to Breasted, 19 July 1932, ISAC Museum Archives.
82. OIC 18, 91–92.
83. Breasted to C. Breasted, 5 April 1933, ISAC Museum Archives.
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90. Hölscher to Allen, 11 March 1935, ISAC Museum Archives; Hölscher to Allen, 9 January 1936, ISAC Museum Archives; Hölscher to Wilson, 22 March 1936, ISAC Museum Archives.
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93. Hölscher to Kraeling, 27 June 1950, ISAC Museum Archives.
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95. Wilson to Hölscher, 7 May 1936, ISAC Museum Archives.
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98. Wilson to Hölscher, 27 February 1939, ISAC Museum Archives.
99. Jacobsen to Hölscher, 10 July 1947, ISAC Museum Archives.
100. Hölscher to Hauser, 30 September 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.
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102. Anthes to Hauser, 3 October 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.
103. Anthes to Hauser, 30 December 1949, ISAC Museum Archives.
104. Anthes to Hauser, 3 October 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.
105. Hölscher to Hauser, 8 February 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.
106. Anthes to Hauser, 30 December 1949, ISAC Museum Archives.
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108. Hölscher to Nelson, 5 September 1927, ISAC Museum Archives.
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120. Hölscher to Nelson, 5 September 1927, ISAC Museum Archives.
121. Breasted to Nelson, 26 September 1927, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1591.
122. Hölscher to Breasted, 22 February 1934, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 304.
123. Nelson to Breasted, 24 February 1931, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 210.
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127. Breasted to Nelson, 16 September 1927, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1585.
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163. Hölscher to Allen, 31 July 1948, ISAC Museum Archives.
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169. Hölscher to Hauser, 20 September 1950, ISAC Museum Archives.
170. Hauser to Anthes, 8 October 1947, ISAC Museum Archives.
171. Jacobsen to Hölscher, 20 August 1947, ISAC Museum Archives.
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173. Anthes to Wilson, 22 May 1941, ISAC Museum Archives.
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175. Hauser to Alexander, 2 November 1950, ISAC Museum Archives.
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194. Hölscher to Breasted, 29 September 1930, ISAC Museum Archives.
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Chapter 5. The Move to Karnak, 1930- (pp. 143-77)

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7. C. Breasted to Nelson, 24 September 1929, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 337.
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17. Nelson to C. Breasted, 13 July 1930, CHP 443.
18. Nelson to Breasted, 3 July 1930, CHP 69.
19. C. Breasted to Nelson, 4 October 1930, CHP 428.
20. Breasted to Nelson, 29 December 1930, CHP 153.
21. Nelson to Breasted, 3 April 1930, CHP 51.
22. Nelson to Breasted, 3 April 1930, CHP 51.
23. Breasted to Nelson, 6 March 1930, CHP 50.
24. Breasted to Nelson, 14 October 1930, CHP 109.
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26. Nelson to Breasted, 20 January 1931, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 199.
27. Nelson to Breasted, 1 August 1930, CHP 80.
28. Nelson to Breasted, 3 July 1930, CHP 69.
29. Breasted to Nelson, 9 July 1930, CHP 76.
30. Breasted to Nelson, 26 July 1930, CHP 72.
31. Nelson to Breasted, 25 October 1931, CHP 278.
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33. Nelson to Breasted, 3 January 1932, ISAC Museum Archives.
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35. Nelson to Breasted, 26 January 1932, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 1274.
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37. Breasted to Nelson, 18 December 1933, ISAC Museum Archives = CHP 299.
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Chapter 6. Luxor Temple, 1937, 1975- (pp. 179-95)

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Egyptologist Emily Teeter received her PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago. Her academic interests focus on popular religion and the material culture of ancient Egypt.

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Currently, Teeter is a research associate of the Negaunee Integrative Research Center at the Field Museum in Chicago, an associate of ISAC at the University of Chicago, and the editor of the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*. She is a past president of the American Research Center in Egypt and serves on several academic boards. She lives in Chicago with her husband, Joe.

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